

Pagan in post-Christianity:

Autoethnography of Manic Psychosis with re- ligious experience

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Preface

I waited approximately two years before embarking upon a project that would document my psychosis. I had disabused myself of many of the beliefs I held when psychotic and had been trying not to allow myself to entertain their plausibility for the past two years. A considerable portion of my life had been compromised by the effects of psychosis, so I thought it wise not to revisit the subject because it might reintroduce me to thoughts that were delusional.

I started the project by reading literature on the subject. Quickly on, I stumbled upon articles by transpersonal psychologists, who had identified a form of psychosis that occurred during mania. One transpersonal psychologist, George Lukoff, had publications in which he described a phenomenon that he coined, “manic psychosis with religious experience.”

Phenomenological accounts that had been written by patients who had the condition, and case studies documenting their life histories supported the conclusion that this psychosis could be therapeutic. Subjects with manic psychosis, who had religious experiences, went on at times to make positive changes to their lives, including spiritual renewals and new career paths.

After reflecting on what I had read, I noted unmistakable similarities between the traits of manic psychosis with religious experience and what I recalled from my own psychosis. I was struck by the beneficial transformations to my life that fomented in my post-psychotic state. These changes were, no doubt, an improvement to my wellbeing, indicating that what happened during my psychosis was ultimately therapeutic. It was the groundwork for a more fulfilling lifestyle with healthier interpersonal relationships and long-awaited advancements to my career.

The only discrepancy between manic psychosis with religious experience and my own psychotic break was the length of time that my psychosis spanned. Manic psychosis, according to some literature, ordinarily lasts for a week to ten days. My own psychosis, depending upon

how its stages are defined, had a full-blown phase lasting for at least a year. Despite the anomalous amount of time that my manic psychosis persisted, I stayed convinced that Lukoff's definition was useful for understanding what I had undergone. My experiences, after all, did have a spiritual component, and I was manic for an extended period. And, As I already mentioned, my life changed for the better because of my psychosis' effect of detaching me from circumstances from which I needed to be extricated if my life were to take a new course. These parallels led me to adopt this transpersonal diagnosis as an analytical tool for breaking down and understanding what had happened.

When first experiencing the prodromal symptoms of psychosis, I was under the impression that I was the subject of an experiment. The project was being conducted by a wealthy family who intended to improve my lifestyle. However, I soon concluded that those behind the intervention didn't plan to help me. Instead, their pretense of aiding was a ploy to conceal ulterior motives. The intervention into my life was intended to bring about my demise. It was a drawn-out operation that restricted the methods it used so that the project didn't risk identification as the direct cause of my death. It relied on techniques for inflicting harm, such as inducing hypnosis and hypnotizing me to inadvertently injure myself. It strived to make me appear self-destructive, leaving in its aftermath only signs of my self-inflicted trauma. I resisted hypnosis for the first year of my psychotic episode by adhering to a strategy for self-preservation that was entirely defensively. Because of the peculiar, disembodied relationship that I had with my attackers; I couldn't retaliate without risking greater damage to my wellbeing.

Eventually, I found myself cornered, a position where I had to consider the likely impossibility of my ongoing survival. On the verge of accepting death as my fate, I remember contem-

plating my demise just moments before experiencing exhilaration as I entered a state of dissociation. I was abruptly entranced and began unmindfully marching in figure eights around the concrete floor of my parent's basement, chanting about a former life. The energy with which I had been infused broke me out of the debilitating stranglehold. For the first time in over a year, I was hopeful. The attitude found expression in the dance and chant that I performed for hours. I spontaneously shouted couplets impressing me as too refined to have been improvised. After I returned from my state of alternate consciousness, it was immediately clear to me that my life was the subject of divine intervention. This decisive juncture in my psychosis marked the start of my religious experience.

Despite the extraordinariness of what had happened, I began writing about my psychosis with the aim of including only excerpts of it that supported the accuracy of Lukoff's transpersonal insights. I organized memories with the intent of substantiating what I had already concluded: instead of uncovering as much evidence as possible and then reaching a conclusion. I fitted the memories into a linear timeframe, exhausting considerable efforts chronologically arranging them. This first approach yielded a document that was approximately twenty pages. Although the narrative of events supported the claim that manic psychosis had therapeutic potential, I retrospectively concluded that what I had written about didn't capture what was significant about my psychosis, which I loosely compared to an Odyssey.

I wasn't satisfied with the work that had resulted, so I restarted the project with an altered purpose in mind. I decided that my psychosis should be allowed to speak for itself, rather than limiting its expression to the recording of memories I selected to support a conclusion that I had formulated before collecting the evidence. The second approach that I developed recorded the

contents of intrusive memories – which served as empirical content for the study, having the effect of standing my conclusions on empirically sounder support.

Consequently, I abstained from using voluntarily recalled memories that I thought in advance might be relevant. Rather, I limited what I recorded to intrusive memories, which, at the time, were regularly occurring. These intrusive memories, which were retrieved through an unconscious mnemonic process, resembled, after they had been transcribed, literary flashbacks. The memories of events covered by the flashbacks weren't experienced in a succession that made their appearance in my mind predictable. The intrusive memories presented themselves haphazardly, each one encompassing unique spans of time that related events to other events from the psychotic episode.

I described only memories that I recalled vividly, and I refrained from introducing statements that I might *ab lib* for the purpose of conveying points of importance. I also abstained from inferring statements that elaborated on topics covered by the text for the purpose of expanding the breath of description. I judged the authenticity of memories as if their genuineness were ostensible. I decided that memories recalled involuntarily, so they were experienced as intrusive, were less likely to be fabricated than those voluntarily retrieved through acts needing mental exertion. Such an activity seemed to leave residues, impressions that might later be mistaken as real and become the basis of a fabricated memory.

The use of flashbacks complicated the temporal organization of the events described by the text. Each individual flashback spanned time according to its own internal logic, which determined what events it incorporated and how it connected them to related events in a story. The expansions of time covered by flashbacks overlap, precluding the possibility of a linear organization of events. The flashbacks and the events they connect are organized asynchronously. Time

in the text generally moves from past to present, but flashbacks sometimes include events that took place prior to events incorporated to descriptions of events that have already been deposited in the text. All that can be said is that time in the macro-narrative incrementally advances. The asynchronous organization of time poses some difficulties to the reader. However, with patience, the reader will find that the contents of the different flashbacks interconnect, weaving together into macro-narrative rich with themes that lend themselves to discussions of symbolism and literary interpretation, even if such analyses don't offer insight into the mechanisms of psychosis, itself.

The organization of the accounts from my psychosis is no different than how stories are presented in some contemporary ethnographies, and, in fact, this document can be said to be autoethnographical. I started by recording memories of subjective experiences taken from my psychosis and refined them as if they were field notes until they were coherent micro-narratives.

Introduction

This study of psychosis uses my recollections from a psychotic episode that I endured in my early thirties. I recorded my memories approximately two years after I had recovered from my psychosis. I was experiencing what might be called flashbacks. I never believed that I was reliving past events, but intrusive vivid memories came to mind. When describing my flashbacks, I used a methodological approach referred to as autoethnography as a means by which to record observations that would serve as empirical data for the study.

Autoethnography was developed from contributions made by a handful of female sociologists. In some ways, it approximates conventional ethnography. For example, those who use autoethnography, similarly to traditional ethnography, *should* take notes to record their observations. The crucial difference between autoethnography and traditional ethnography is the phenomena that they observe. Unlike ethnography, the autoethnographic researcher is concerned with private phenomena, which are part of her subjective experiences. This space is private because its opacity to public observers. It is a space only accessible to the subject. Conventional ethnography gathers observations of phenomena from a mind-independent reality. Rather than recording observations from acts of introspection, the ethnographer is concerned with what exists that is outer to himself.

By looking at private phenomena belonging to subjective experience as opposed to what exists outside as part of a mind-independent reality, the researcher can offer descriptions of internal states, such as moods and emotions, traditionally omitted from ethnographic literature. The proponents of autoethnography say that the ability to include renderings of emotions is liberating for them after having their ability to externalize private experiences, especially emotions, repressed by an androcentric discipline. In my case, I have adopted autoethnography because it

safeguards me from psychiatric disciplinary practices that either silence or ignore enunciations from psychotic subjects that articulate their experiences. It permitted me to report about my experiences when psychotic while shielding me from psychiatric interventions.

I contribute to sociology by connecting statements that express the contents of observations taken from my subjective experiences to theoretical points made in sociological literature. I analyze the autoethnographic accounts using insights that are expressed as a part of what I'll call Garfinkel's indexical thesis, that he articulated in his, "Studies in Ethnomethodology." Garfinkel, here, concerns himself with providing insights into the work required to interpret the meaning of ambiguous communication, which we can assume extends to include gesticulations and other behaviors. When the meaning of an expression is indeterminate, he refers to its lexicon with the term indexical.

The intersubjectivity among agents involved in social interaction, according to Garfinkel, is contingent. Therefore, shared interpretations of meaning are not pre-given and not a certainty. Shared meaning, rather, must be achieved through the work of the actors engaged in the interaction, who participate in an "ongoing cooperative affair", through which meaning is produced. Actors must employ interpretive techniques, or ethnomethods, when making sense of the speech and behavior of counterparts. It also possible to extend the concept, Ethnomethods, to the work that is done while remaining accountable during an interaction. Accountability refers to the obligation of an actor to comport himself, so that the intended meaning of his actions is intelligible to counterparts. He is responsible for interpreting and remaining interpretable during the ongoing series of cooperative behaviors in social interactions.

I contribute to ethnomethodology by defining a phenomenon that I disclosed from the analysis of interactions that I had with a psychiatrist and a counselor, both of whom treated me

when I was experiencing the prodromal symptoms of psychosis. I point out that, while assuming the role of a diagnostician, prejudices that shaped their assumptions concerning my life history likely affected their interpretations of me. They formed the impression of me as someone with a personality disorder, despite my resistance to the diagnosis.

If my understanding of the events that transpired is accurate, multiple instances occurred during our intercourse where unresolved interpretive conflicts remained, incongruities that can have implications for later interpretations of what took place. Such fractures to our intersubjectivity did not have the effect of breaking down the interaction. The effects of this newly discovered phenomenon are more subtle than the consequences of the breaches made by researchers in breaching experiments. The sequential turn-taking never came to a stop, and neither party was provoked to anger. The interactions continued with little trouble. Only later did I realize that the breaches to inter-subjectivity had consequences.

Ontology

Psychiatry embraces a theory of science referred to as logical positivism, which has some important implications for the discipline's construction of diagnoses. Having evolved from British empiricism, logical positivism distanced itself from rationalist philosophers who relied on reason and speculation to develop knowledge. Logical positivists characterized rationalist philosophical inquiries as metaphysical, because the questions they posed led to conclusions that weren't supported by direct experience. Logical positivists adopted an anti-realist ontology, limiting their inquiry to conclusions derived from observations of brute, raw facts or composites constructed from basic sensory impressions, which are the same as facts. These impressions serve as the elemental building blocks of knowledge.

According to their thought, for something to exist, it must be directly observable. Even complicated composites, such as trees and houses, can be reduced to basic impressions that are part of an individual's experiences. Concepts that cannot be directly observed but have important utilities for science are referred to by logical positivists as posits. Molecules and atoms are examples of posits, although they are not good examples, because they cannot be tied down to direct observations. According to positivists, they cannot be directly observed so they do not exist, but they are, nevertheless, useful for explaining some of our sensations, such as the experience one gets from looking into a high-powered microscope. They are analytical devices that help to organize our experiences but only exist as definitions. Although many in the sciences are unaware of the ontological position taken by logical positivism, they continue to treat the logical positivism as orthodoxy.

The ontology presupposed by logical positivism has important consequences for psychiatry. Psychosis is treated by psychiatry as a construct that is a composite of symptoms. The symptoms, in other words, are the psychosis, itself. It wouldn't make sense to incorporate anything other than symptoms, because all the concepts need to be tied to direct observations.

In the Twentieth Century, there was a backlash to the Vienna Circle. Karl Popper dissented to some important principles of logical positivism. He didn't think that the scientific method involved inductive logic. He thought inductive logic only resulted in reinforcing prejudices. More significantly, he didn't adopt the ontology that logical positivism, which evolved from empiricism, continued to uphold. Contrary to an anti-realist ontology, Popper believed in the existence of a mind-independent reality and trusted his perceptions of it to the point that he was a naïve realist. He took for granted what he saw as an accurate representation of objects in a mind-independent reality. His ontological division between subjectivity and objectivity along with his dismissal of induction as part of the logic of the scientific method, led him to adopt a different definition of truth. He didn't define truth as sensory impressions or composites formed from sensory impressions. Instead, he defined truth according to a correspondence theory. This meant that true ideas were representations of facts in a mind-independent objective reality. Truth, as Popper understood it, was determined by the correspondence of propositions, which are beliefs, to facts.

With a realist ontology, it is possible to understand psychosis as more than a composite assembled from experiences involving delusions and hallucinations. The abandonment of an anti-realist ontology allows for there to exist mechanisms that control psychosis, even if they are not directly observable. The symptoms of psychosis that are subjectively experienced can be defined as derivatives of psychosis. Psychosis can be considered, for the lack of a better expression,

a collection of syntactic rules influencing how psychosis can be constructed when it goes through revision in reaction to conflicts between the propositional contents of its beliefs with facts in objective reality; or, at the very least, this will be the position that I advance.

Chapter I

Psychiatry

After moving to Albany to enroll in the university's sociology program, I sought treatment from a psychiatrist at a local clinic for my schizoaffective disorder diagnosis. I remained under the care of the elderly male psychiatrist at the clinic for a couple of years. I repeatedly asked him for prescriptions to benzodiazepines and stimulants, such as Ritalin and Adderall, referring to an ADHD diagnosis that was given to me by a psychologist whom I had seen shortly after graduating from college. He repeatedly denied my requests, advising me that the medications might exacerbate my symptoms.

Eventually the Spanish psychiatrist acquiesced to my requests for sedatives, but he continued to deny me prescriptions to stimulants used to treat ADHD. I supplemented my supply of benzodiazepines by ordering clonazepam and Xanax from services that consulted with patients via telephone. My use of benzodiazepines grew to levels that compromised my ability to concentrate. Over the summer I was preparing for my second comprehensive exam. I flipped through the thirty or so assigned monographs, but I retained little of what I read. Out of frustration and increasing desperation, I made an appeal to my old physician, Dr. Divan. I explained to her my dilemma, and she agreed to prescribe me Adderall. I just needed to make an appointment and drive from Chicago to Pittsburgh to see her. During the appointment, she wrote two ninety-count prescriptions to Amphetamine Salts. I now had unusually large prescriptions to both immediate-release Adderall and sustained-release Adderall. Citing Divan's prescription as

precedent, when I resumed seeing the Spanish psychiatrist after returning in the fall to Albany, I talked him into prescribing sixty milligrams of Adderall daily. I neglected to disclose that I continued to receive prescriptions in the mail that were sent by Divan, which I filled by driving north to nearby Vermont.

After I had become ABD, I returned to Chicago to reside with my parents. I made appointments with several doctors and psychiatrists in the months that followed. One psychiatrist, who agreed to prescribe me a moderate dose of Adderall, suggested that I was bipolar. He proposed the alternative diagnosis after hearing the troubling biography of my deceased uncle, who had a psychotic break during his graduate studies in the mathematics program at Penn State. He wrote a master's thesis in the asylum in which he was committed and diagnosed as schizophrenic. He recovered and lived independently for a time, but his mental health deteriorated after joining the military. He enlisted after coming to believe that he needed greater personal discipline. He soon cracked under the pressure and suffered another psychotic break that caused him to go AWOL. After he was found, he was confined to a halfway house for the remainder of his life. Never fully engaged in his social surroundings, he always seemed distracted as if he lived mostly in his head.

I returned to Albany to teach at Siena College after spending the last two years at home with my parents. I moved back with my parents to fight a crack addiction. I was still taking large doses of Adderall and had started taking Seroquel to relieve the insomnia caused by the stimulant. Each nightly dose of Seroquel was followed by acute depression that I suffered shortly after I had taken the antipsychotic. I felt despair for at least an hour before falling asleep from the Seroquel's sedation. After returning to Albany, I returned every three months to Chicago for an appointment with Ing Lam. She appeared mystified when I described for her the intense

emotional discomfort that I attributed to Seroquel. At one point, she suggested that I take four milligrams of Xanax in lieu of the Seroquel. After a few months I took myself off the four milligrams of Xanax that I took at bedtime and resumed taking Seroquel at lower doses. I rarely asked for additional Adderall; instead, I waited for her to recommend increases to my Adderall prescription in response to my reporting of symptoms that I exaggerated, such as depression that she found alarming enough for her to propose increasing my dose of Adderall, taking advantage of one of its side panel uses.

My behaviors in graduate school took on a character that was linked to the high doses of Paxil in combination with high doses of Adderall. Prolonged exposure to both drugs altered my personality. I changed from a self-conscious, shy individual into someone who was socially uninhibited. The change left me little opportunity to develop adequate skills for coping with new social impulses. I was now charged with a social energy that electrified my personality, generating a magnetism that attracted others. I became more subversive and irreverent as Dionysian dispositions overtook my personality. Outgoing and boisterous, I served as the life of the party. During the social outings that were organized by the department, I walked from conversation to conversation, taking each one over so I could make irreverent remarks. After I had gotten laughs, I moved on to the next cluster of professors and graduate students.

I was under the impression that I was unquestioningly hilarious. This conclusion was supported by the laughter that I regularly got in reaction to my jokes. I followed a formula that called for me to express a sentiment that was so perverse that it was absurd. After inducing a silent reaction by the audience, which were accompanied by looks of mild dismay, I revealed that I wasn't serious, but in doing so I converted a different position that was equally perverse. The final stage of the joke entailed debriefing the audience. I informed those listening that it had

all been a joke, indicating that nothing that I had said reflected my values or beliefs. It was a subtle form of self-deprecating humor that failed to make the audience uncomfortable, because it was conveyed with self-confidence. My unreservedness attracted the interests of beautiful women. None went so far as to proposition me, but they flirted with me. One woman in my cohort asked me out on a date, an opportunity that I wasted by taking three or four times the normal dose of Ambien in preparation for the night out.

Although I was crack free, I remained dependent on other habit-forming substances. I took daily over a hundred-fifty milligrams of Adderall and sometimes more. At night, I used the Seroquel that I had been prescribed as a sedative that induce drowsiness. Every evening, twenty minutes after I took the four-hundred-milligram dose of Seroquel, I felt my emotions plummet. The mood that I entered left me with frightening thoughts of impending loneliness that I'd endure after growing older. Despair over the fate that awaited paralyzed my body, as I rested on a mattress before eventually falling asleep.

Madness

On a conscious level, I realized drugs caused dysfunction and dissatisfaction in my life, so I needed to free myself of drug dependency by resisting my use them. I didn't think of recovery a desirable option because of the suffering it entailed, which motivated me to develop an alternative plan for counteracting my chronic, habitual drug use. I would reconfigure my lifestyle. I'd participate in more activities that I found enjoyable, so my pursuit of pleasures diversified. By occupying my time with activities, I'd have less time to consume drugs. Drug addiction had colonized a considerable extent of my life. As an insurgency tactic, I planned to become more engaged in hobbies.

I wanted to help stop the Iraq war, so I attended a Green Party meeting on campus. After arriving, I was alarmed to learn that the meeting's agenda excluded the military conflict as a topic. Instead, the meeting was dedicated to the apparent controversy among members of the campus Green Party over the legality of abortion. I raised my objections to the topic. The urgency that I felt about the war affected my ability to respect decorum and I had the effect of making the meeting rancorous. Nevertheless, after the meeting had concluded, I composed myself and departed on cordial terms with party members.

After returning home, I felt a swell of indignity, so I emailed everybody in the SUNY Albany Green Party to mock their failure to treat the war as a prescient issue. I got angry responses from one or two of the members. I replied combatively. Soon, I was engaged in a full-blown flaming battle with the on-campus Greens. One of the members stated that I was mean-spirited. Responding that she was not qualified to assess the nature of such a religious object, I dismissed her characterization of me. The email melee ended with the campus green party leader announcing that she was going to block communications between irate members of her association and me. I agreed that it was time to end the insults, saying, "I need to get back to work." Later, I orated a letter from one of the Green Party members to my sociology of culture class. I ridiculed the author, whom I kept anonymous, for a logical contradiction in his argument. A few students expressed their own negative perceptions of the student political organization. Despite my inappropriate use of class time, I still had enough credibility as an instructor to keep command of the classroom, even though my behavior certainly raised concerns among students. I remember one female student looking at me with teary eyes at times. It was clear to her, I believe, that I was suffering the early stages of a meltdown.

After devoting a class to exposing problems with the campus greens, I transitioned to the current war that was being waged in Iraq. In nearly every class, I voiced my objections to the Bush Administration's handling of the campaign in Iraq. I didn't want to take the same track as the anti-war protestors who demonstrated a profound ignorance about which they spoke during the lead-up to the invasion. So, I decided to distinguish myself from them by recognizing that war was as a natural phenomenon, and it wasn't war itself to which I objected. Rather, it was what I called the "prosecution," of the war that gave me misgivings. I criticized the use of eighteen-year-old women leading convoys in conflict-ridden territory. Prefacing my remarks by saying, "I don't have a paternal bone in my body," I went on to describe how the placement of young women in extreme jeopardy caused me visceral uneasiness.

I introduced a simplistic polemic for why the Iraq war was ill conceived. The enterprise depended upon the assumption that Iraqis shared a national identity. I used standpoint theory to demonstrate that the identity of an Iraqi was an intersection of different standpoints in Iraqi society, including Shia and Sunni. The Bush administration had naively assumed that religious identities didn't interfere with the social integration necessary for a stable Hussein-free Iraq. I stated in class that if you must go to war against this country, then, at the very least, drop in the anthropologists first so that we can build an understanding of identity formation within Iraqi culture. As far as I knew, nobody else had articulated such complaints in a social setting that was part of a university campus other than maybe in the teach-ins that had been staged and they had already come to an end.

I thought it necessary to denounce the Bush Administration every class that I lectured. After spending time examining the behaviors of West Virginian troops who humiliated and tortured detained Iraqis, I moved on to a subject that shed light on the historical significance of

torturing the captured enemy. I condemned the Bush administration for defying longstanding American tradition that began with George Washington's refusal to mistreat captured enemy. Using myself as an example, I stated that this practice had robbed me of my birthright, which would have made me an inheritor of the good will that ensued from the tradition that started from George Washington's precedent.

My polemics transgressed an informal rule that political journalists explained using mass media. During conflicts, Americans were expected to demonstrate only support for the military's war efforts. Criticism of military planning and its execution were said to comfort the enemy. I disregarded the practice because I thought America was descending into a crisis that had signs of what Victor Turner referred to as a social drama. If left unresolved, it could lead to the dissolution of American society allowing it to restructure into something unpredictable and potentially undesirable.

I was also under the impression that the American economy was in risk of collapse. Pointing out that growth to the American economy was largely dependent upon industries that produced goods of no enduring value, I mentioned that the American GDP grew because of innovations in things such as the yogurt parfait industry, gimmicks that multiplied transactions but introduced little lasting value to society. I warned students that they should enjoy American prosperity while it lasted.

I found myself personally at war with the Bush Administration. I tried to provide my students with the skills necessary to resist tyranny themselves. So, I challenged them to intellectual contests in class. During one such match, I interpreted a student to have trumped me. I claimed to be crippled from his assault and insisted that he strike the death blow. I demanded

that he, "...Knock me off my feet." After the annoyed student hesitated for several moments, I broke out into condescending laughter.

Expanding the scope of my criticism, I attacked groups other than the administration. I never bothered to explain why the new criticisms were related to my original critique of the Bush Administration. I chastised right-wing Christian groups for promoting abstention from premarital sex. I complained that girls who had taken virginity vows were more likely to have riskier anal sex, remarking that they had found a loophole in the contract.

I sensed that I had alienated some or most of the students and made some even resentful. I overheard two young women conspire to get me removed from my position because I had used profanity in class. I noticed three men around the age of twenty following me when I drove home in my car from the university campus. They remained visible in my rearview mirror until I doubled back. When in my apartment, I observed a carload of students outside in the parking lot asking another resident where I lived. I secluded myself from the outside world as much as possible to avoid the controversy that I had created.

About midway through the semester, I learned that the sociology department decided not to rehire me as the instructor for the sociology of culture course the next semester. My academic status was my last refuge. It served as a stronghold against drug addiction's complete colonization of my life and its takeover of my identity. I voiced my disappointment to the head of the department, who offered little solace, explaining to me that I should concentrate on my dissertation.

The department then passed on me for another course that became available, introduction to sociology. I lost my composure and acted with hostility toward the department. I copied and pasted email addresses from a departmental email and posed the question, why do all the grants

support research in fields such as criminology and demography while none of them seem to go to fields like critical theory? I ended the letter by stating that to answer such a question all one needed to do was follow the money back to its source.

Unfortunately for me, one of the members of the department privately responded. Implementing the same strategy that had forced campus greens to lose formation, I coaxed him into an imaginary battlefield by challenging him to a contest. After shielding myself from a few of his blows, I counterattacked. I interpreted the end of his remarks to imply that my letters were taken to be spam by their recipients and used his insult as a pretext to send an indignant warning stating that he must immediately apologize or face retaliation.

After failing to receive a response, I drafted another letter that I felt intellectually vanquished my opponent. I sent this letter, after removing his name to conceal his identity, to countless others in the department. I didn't consider physical violence as a means by which to reestablish the honor that I believed others to have taken. Resorting to violence wouldn't have been satisfying. Only acknowledgement of my intellectual abilities could reestablish my standing.

During a brief conversation with a member of my dissertation committee, I tried to explain the purpose behind my activist efforts. My oppositional politics were, of course, focused on the Bush Administration. The administration, however, was not the full extent of my concerns. I had identified the university as a focal point of power in society. It was a nexus in which disciplinary and bio-power met and micro-technologies were innovated. In a conversation with a professor in the department, I remember him trying to explain that universities provide many different functions. My ability to see things with nuance had given way to a reality formed only of totalities and binaries.

During the only Green Party meeting that I attended at SUNY at Albany, I had intercepted a waiver, by accident, for a program referred to as “Quick Alcohol Intervention.” The waiver was mixed among the litany of papers that I had scattered on the carpet floor. After forming a quick impression of what it was, I became infuriated. A male psychologist from Albany’s counseling department, who had treated me years back for drug addiction, I thought was responsible for the consent-waver to an alcohol-treatment program coming into my possession.

I drove to the university health center, where I demanded to see the head administrator. The woman behind the desk picked up the phone and said, “You better get down here.” A few moments later a man in a suite appeared with a walkie-talkie strapped to his waist. As soon as the man saw me, he grabbed his walkie-talkie and said something into it. I assumed that he was radioing for campus police. When he approached, I handed him the waiver and insisted that he explain why it had been distributed to me. He told me to go upstairs with him, so I walked behind him. He whispered to me, “Why are you doing this?” I answered that I studied critical theory and suggested that what I was doing was an application of it. After reaching the second floor to the counseling center, he told me to sit in a hallway chair. As I was sitting down, he said in an elevated voice, “Don’t hurt anybody!” I lifted my hands in the air and asserted that I wasn’t a threat to anyone.

The man returned, and I followed him down the stairs. He then asked to make a copy of the waiver. I objected. The man grabbed the paper out of my hands and closed the door after entering a room. After supposedly making a photocopy, he returned the waiver to me. At this point, two campus police officers had arrived. The officer who questioned me had a New York City accent. He asked me what medications I took. I responded that divulging such information

was not in my interests and instructed him to stop asking me questions. We exchanged insults. His colleague, who had an upstate accent, interceded to mitigate tensions.

I later noticed that the waiver wasn't intended for me. Instead, the program had recruited an undergraduate student. He had signed his name on the form, but my haste had caused me to overlook it. My rage redirected itself upon a new target. I remained insistent that the program was an unwarranted interference into an emerging adult's life, and it had the potential of damaging his ability to effectively self-actualize in society. The student might internalize the Twelve Steps, which I thought tantamount to a slave ideology, and be left obsessing the rest of his life over his potential moral failings. He'd remain inhibited and constrained by morality, rather than fashioning it and imposing on others.

After deciding to park at the campus police building, I learned that I wasn't going to be arrested for disorderly conduct, but one of the officer's informed me that my behavior was going to be reported to the dean of students. I made my way to the administration offices, so I could preemptively defend myself to the Dean. I was afraid that he might decide to take disciplinary action before speaking to me. When I asked to see the Dean, the secretary responded that he would be out of the office for forty-five minutes. I requested a copy of the school's constitution. I perused the document and constructed a defense against possible charges. My meeting with the Dean ended with no disciplinary action. I don't know what his motivation was but during the meeting he revealed that the student whose signature was on the waiver was seventeen.

I eventually entered the campus security complex. The officer standing outside the office said, "Mr. Cole, we have been looking for you," and led me into the station. After he informed me that the medical director had banned me from the health center, the officer accused me of disturbing the peace referring to my distribution of a plaintiff letter that I had drafted so to pass

out to people in the building. I asked him for a definition of the crime. The officer said that he didn't know the wording of the statute off hand, but he said that could look it up. I questioned how he could investigate a crime without knowing its definition. He ended our confrontation by escorting me out of the station. I left and started searching for where I had parked my car, but I was disoriented and had no success finding my vehicle. Having no other recourse, I solicited the assistance of a campus police officer and rode with him until we sighted my car.

In days that followed, I turned my attention to the orchestrator of the study. She was a psychologist at the counseling center. I assumed the role of an advocate for the student who had been recruited as a subject and claimed to be acting on his behalf. I gathered that I had antagonized important people after Human Resources invited me to a meeting under false pretenses. They blindsided me by threatening me with expulsion from graduate school if I didn't cease and desist. They told me that there was a woman who claimed that I had assaulted her in the building that housed the sociology department. During the exchange, the older of the two men, who stood behind me, asked what business of mine to interfere with a program that had nothing to do with me. I claimed that I was simply practicing free speech and that it was my business because I was a member of the university community.

I asked, "So, this campus is now a police state."

The elder of the two men in the human resources office responded, "That's right."

The younger man, who sat at the desk in the office, requested that I seek counseling. Buckling under pressure, I agreed. When on the parking lot of the building I saw the older of the two men in the passenger seat of a campus police car. I was later outraged to discover that the psychologist, to whom I had been referred, was a woman who specialized in treating sexual-assault-related cases. The threat of an assault charge, however, didn't faze me because I had

determined that there was a class in session that occupied a room in propinquity to where the alleged crime was reported to have taken place. I asked the professor teaching the class if she had heard anything unusual at the time when the assault supposedly occurred. She responded to me that she hadn't. After explaining my reasons for asking, she said, "I know what they do." I remembered her once describing East German secret police practices that tried to make people think that they were insane.

At home in my apartment, I spent much of my time writing blogs that ranted about problems in America. I had constructed an MSN Spaces blog on which I posted incoherent public letters. The United States had begun using Guantanamo Bay for holding prisoners that the Administration defined as, "Illegal Combatants." I decided to voice my objections by messaging the FBI. I perused the agency's website until I found a form to submit tips about terrorists and possible terroristic acts. In the submission, I claimed that I had observed dark-skinned men on television. Despite how they appear, they were not the real criminals. It was the people responsible for detaining them who are the culprits. The United States Government illegally imprisoned foreigners who had been captured by the U.S. Military. After proofreading the message for anything that might make it illegal, I submitted it into the form. As soon as I pressed the return key, a popup appeared. It stated that I had consented to various forms of surveillance only to have the popup message disappear after a few seconds.

Before one of my appointments with the psychologist to whom the human resources agent had referred me while waiting in the counseling center, an aging woman with permed hair that she had tightly knit, walked past where I sat in the waiting room. As she passed, she turned her head to look at me and said, "Asshole." I knew that she was trying to provoke me to act aggressively. If my actions came to be perceived as threatening, it could result in a writ of

protection against me, restricting my movement on campus, which would have made my doctoral degree impossible to complete.

Instead of confronting the woman, I said, “How uncivil,” and remained seated as I waited for my appointment.

The “asshole” incident motivated me to write an individual working in a state government agency whose identity I had discovered from an internet search. He oversaw the grant that funded the quick alcohol intervention program. In the letter to him, I argued that there were flaws to the study because of the possibility of reactive effects upon subjects. The school was already disciplining the students who were subjects of the research, so they likely understood their treatment under the program as an extension of their punishment by the university. Consequently, the student who served as a research subject probably believed that his responses to questionnaires needed to indicate that the intervention benefitted him. The recipient of the letter failed to ignore me. Instead, his response argumentatively defended the study. I wrote the bureaucrat back and sent copies of the email to others who worked in the state agency. I was unable to observe the effect of the correspondences, but I assumed that the emails had created annoyance if not difficulty for the director of the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program.

During this tumultuous period in my life, I suspected that I was under investigation by the FBI and the university. I saw recurring faces, leading me to believe that I was under surveillance. When I had gone up a stone staircase that led to the Office of the Dean of Students, I passed a balding man in his fifties who had on glasses. He said, “She’s going to need to get an attorney.” I assumed that he had referred to the director of the Quick Alcohol Intervention. I saw him on a few subsequent occasions. When I was eating brunch with my family members who visited in response to my mental condition to offer support, I overheard a conversation take place between

the balding man and a woman at a table next to me. The man insisted that I enjoyed getting people fired. The woman refused to agree. Listening to what they said, I attempted to engage in backchannel communications. I said in an elevated volume during my table's conversation, "I did what I thought was right." I also made a point of bringing up the issue of Canadian aliens who took jobs in America. I wanted to indicate that ethnic resentment didn't motivate my opposition to an open border with Mexico, a position that I had articulated in a former class.

On weekdays, I frequented Bruegger's Bagels for lunch. While standing in line I saw an unusually attractive brunette, who was approximately my age. I had seen her in passing once before on a university sidewalk. I purposively paid her no attention. Talking on a cellphone behind me, she said, "I don't know. I think he might be gay." I assumed that I was being experimented on. I believed that I needed legal counsel, so I pick an afternoon to walk the streets of Albany looking for an agency which offered free legal support. I never successfully found the agency's office, which was nestled somewhere on ghetto streets, but I did manage to lose track again of where I had parked my car. I searched for the vehicle for hours. When halfway atop the hill on Madison Avenue I saw the old woman from the counseling center who had called me an asshole presently standing amongst a group of people below. I heard one attractive, younger woman say, "Should we intervene?"

The elderly counselor said, "No."

I turned around to continue climbing the hill. Twenty feet away, walking toward me, was the fifty-year old, balding man. As I approached the man, I made a cellphone call to my father and I said, "I need to be rescued," going on to explain that I couldn't find my car. I don't understand the details of my intent for having him overhear my appeal, but I'm certain it was an attempt at back-channel diplomacy.

On a day that followed, I entered the classroom where I taught the sociology of culture class so to drop off a stack of papers that I planned to later distribute to students. I walked in on two plainly dressed men setting up what appeared to be a video recorder. I apologized for intruding and simply left. During the class that later took place, I tried to communicate to those monitoring my teaching. Dropping to my knees, I announced that I submitted to whatever authority had me under surveillance.

For a period, everybody in the department was cold to me, treating me like a pariah. Department members ignored me as I walked the hallways to conduct recognizance by overhearing conversations. At one point, I sat in the department lounge and detected a meeting taking place behind closed doors in the conference room. I happened to be the subject of discussion. When the meeting adjourned, the door opened and one female professor who saw me said, "...It's like he has a radar or something." The members of the department then exited along with the Dean of Students. I turned and walked to my mailbox. Looking in the slot, I noticed a pamphlet from the president's office. The new politically conservative president of SUNY at Albany had created a magazine covering his pedagogical philosophy. I looked at the mail given to other graduate students and didn't see the invitation. Apart from myself, it appeared that only fulltime faculty had received it. The invite was to the president's first speech to the university. I suspected that it was a ploy to humiliate me, so I didn't consider attending.

When walking to class I saw the man in his fifties along with a younger woman in her late twenties who had dark, short hair. She turned to the balding man and said, "Are we going to follow him to Chicago?"

The man responded, "No, we won't go to Chicago."

I later witnessed a mock firing of the short-haired, brunette, who was apparently responsible for distributing the waver to the minor. The middle-aged, balding man with glasses and the elderly female counselor appeared to be comforting their departing colleague. I paid attention to the termination for a moment before I proceeded to class. I had caused everyone at the state flagship state university to mock and degrade me other than one friend who remained loyal. While we sat together in my office, I explained to him that I had intercepted a waver for the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program. I suggested that it could use as an exemplar of the concrete workings of Biopower, since it targeted a group in the population. I was convinced that divine grace had endowed me with the document because I couldn't explain how it came into my possession. In my mind, what happened to me lent itself to a quasi-religious interpretation.

My friend departed when the head of the department entered. The chair of the department asked me how I was doing. I responded that there were two of me: a congenial version and a combative version. I assured him that I'd soon convert back to my previous congenial form. I shook his hand after promising to finish teaching my class that semester.

The university published the president's speech following the semester's end, which I noticed after I had arrived in Frankfort. I detected passages that subtly referenced remarks I had made in my MSN Spaces blog. He defended the architectural design of the university. I had ridiculed its structure, saying that it looked like a nineteen-fifties representation of what a base on Mars would look like. When constructing polemics against the director of the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program, I had argued that norms were arbitrary, and that one system of norms shouldn't be prioritized, leading to its naturalization. The President assured his audience that there were norms to which all members of society consented.

Although I never reflected on it, on some level, I felt that it had been victimized by bureaucrats who had molested me. Why was I followed by people who were on university property? Why did they attempt to influence my behaviors by staging dialogue that they intended for me to overhear? Living at my parents, I focused my retaliation upon the woman who called me an asshole in the counseling center. For a considerable time, I falsely believed that she was the psychologist who oversaw the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program. I knew virtually nothing about the woman, not even what she looked like. She served as symbol for me that represented practices in society that I had come to understand as instruments of power and discipline. To draw attention to the function that people like her had, I used the MSN weblog, into which I injected programing by using its HTML editor, I stuffed the HTML header with keywords, so my blog was included in the first page of search results for queries of her name.

Following my public humiliation at SUNY at Albany, I sought treatment from a new psychiatrist in the Chicago area. I described to her my condition again as schizoaffective disorder. I mentioned to my psychiatrist that I had suffered trauma when in graduate school. Never rendering much of what had happened, I offered vague descriptions of the behaviors caused by my condition, referring to it as “meltdown” or sometimes as a “psychotic break.” The embarrassment that I suffered prevented me from reflecting upon memories of it. The pain and discomfort that the surfacing of such memories caused me to be reticent to say anything about it other than a few nondescript remarks.

I liked the Chicago psychiatrist because she wasn’t reluctant to increase the doses of Adderall. In fact, she had no problem using the medication for side-panel uses. In my case to counteract the effects of depression. At one point, she had me up to one hundred and fifty milligrams of Adderall a day because she thought it would be an immediate means of relieving

the severe depression that I reported myself to have. For the large doses of Adderall that led to sleeplessness, she treated me with prescriptions to Seroquel.

Chapter II

Chapter II

Prodromal

When at St. Xavier University in South Chicago, I heard voices coming from behind a wall on which the whiteboard was placed. On two occasions, I heard a young female's voice make some insulting comment about my teaching. I responded by working into the lecture my own defensive response. The utterance that I spoke took on two simultaneous significations. The utterance had one meaning in the context of the lecture and one meaning in the context of the exchange between the impolite female and me. Following my remark, I overheard the woman who had called me an asshole in the counseling center say, "All right...let's go," indicating to her companions that it was time to leave. The Albany psychologist had apparently been listening to the class that I was instructing by stationing her companions and herself in an adjacent classroom. Sensing their departure, I knew that I had wasted an opportunity to verify that she was, in fact, present.

I was concurrently teaching classes at Lewis University and Saint Xavier University, both of which were private Catholic universities. When purchasing a parking pass for the Lewis university, I struggled to figure out where I go to stand in line. After looking around for a couple of moments, I discovered the line's end and exclaimed, "Oh, I'm Retarded." Hearing what I said, a dark-haired woman in her mid-twenties turned around and engaged me in a short conversation. She was a graduate student in the social-worker program. Although I had no intention of asking her out on a date, she went out of her way to mention that she lived with her boyfriend who was also attending Lewis.

I heard her voice on a couple of occasions outside the rooms where I was teaching classes. In another instance, I saw her talking to a professor from the psychology department, whose office was visible through the doorway. I couldn't be certain of what they said, but I suspected that I was the topic of their conversation. As I taught another class, I said in a tangential remark, "The only thing I know about religion is that I don't have one," and heard the voice of the social-worker student laughing in the hallway.

During that semester, the sociology department at Lewis University was in the process of hiring a fulltime faculty member. My mania hadn't subsided, and I continued to be grandiose. Despite only having an ABD, I believed that my application for the position was competitive, so I applied despite the department chair already having suggested to me that I had no chance of being hired. Reaching the conclusion that I had not been selected for an interview, I became indignant. I began sending argumentative, plaintiff letters to Lewis's human resources office, addressing any institutional practice that I interpreted as vulnerable to criticism.

After learning of the school's plans to expand its programs, I emailed the chair of the sociology department to deter Lewis from instituting a sociology graduate program. Since the faculty had no publications, I argued that such an enterprise would result in unemployed graduates from the program. When exiting a class, I turned my head and looked over my shoulder. I saw the woman's face from the Albany counseling center. She was standing among a group of elderly faculty members. As she made eye contact with me, I heard she say, "...So what does he research?" Ignoring her, I turned my head and walked to where I had parked my car.

Suspicion

After years had passed from my last semester at the university before departing to live with my parents, I was outside in my parent's front lawn letting one of my family's poodles

relieve herself on the grass. Out of the corner of my eye, across the street I saw Barbara, a woman who lived across the street, talking to a red-haired woman who sported an Eddie Bauer cap. I had missed the preponderance of the conversation, but I did happen to overhear Barbara say, “No, he’s ok...,” indicating to me that the elderly woman had suggested that I was a threat to the bedroom community. After all, such a remark wouldn’t surprise me. I was a single man, in my thirties, and underemployed. Making it worse, I lived with my parents, another outward sign of maladjustment.

I remembered seeing the plump, middle-aged woman a few years earlier during the two years that I instructed as part-time adjunct at Sienna College. I was under the impression that she was the guardian of the two young adults, who had lived in the apartment above me at Deer Valley Apartments. I first saw their two childish faces when I was in the process of moving into my newly rented first-floor unit. Their heads peered at me through a second story window. The girl said, “That’s him,” as I carried books in both hands from my car into the front door. Since they knew who I was, I assumed that they were first-year graduate students in the sociology program who had likely heard of my meltdown.

While residing under the couple, I overheard them talking, and I sometimes listened to their conversations. They, at one point, discussed what they had overheard after I had entertained a part-time sex worker, from whom I received sexual favors in exchange for resolving a minor financial problem of hers. I heard the female say, “He didn’t even cuddle with her.”

On one of the nights that followed, I heard their voices discussing matters related to me with an adult male, whom I suspected to be a police officer. I rested on the floor nervously as the officer explained, “Some men give gifts to women. You know how these things go.” The two

youngsters must have reported that they had overheard a transaction take place between the sex worker and me.

To ensure my apprehension, the upstairs boy pleaded with the officer to check my medicine cabinet. I had been doctor shopping for Adderall, so I found the comment disconcerting. I reacted by remaining silent and still. The officer responded exasperatedly, “I’m not looking in a man’s medicine cabinet.”

“But he’s an animal! All he does is eat,” the girl exclaimed. She must have been referring to the noise that I had made when warming two frozen entrees earlier in the evening.

The officer replied, “Then it’s unlikely he is on crack. Are you sure that he’s not smoking pot? Did you see the pipe? What did it look like?”

There was a moment of silence. The officer then said, “Don’t ever call us again.”

I waited a few moments and opened my apartment door. I looked out and saw nothing unusual. Either I was hallucinating, or the officer had arrived in an unmarked car. Weeks after the event, I noticed that new tenants had moved in upstairs. I thought that the nosey couple, who had appealed for my arrest, had relocated to a different building in the complex.

On my back, resting on a mattress positioned on the floor, I used to say at night, “I’m so insignificant. Why would anybody be after me?” I was doctor shopping, but that was a victimless crime and rarely enforced. Furthermore, apart from teaching at Sienna, I had been afraid to leave my apartment except to purchase necessities, making me unknown to most people in the neighborhood. I lived in the solitude because it was a necessary condition if I were to control my impulses and refrain from relapsing on crack. I was thirty-years and had lived with my parents for the past five years. The job that I held was a part-time adjunct position at Siena College. It wasn’t ideal because my job didn’t afford me the resources needed for me to be self-sufficient.

Nevertheless, with financial support from my parents, the job provided an opportunity to live independently and become more confident that I had regained enough impulse control to resist relapsing on crack.

Marge

The woman whom I had seen speaking to Barbara seemed to be the caretaker of Deidra and domino. She visited the two young adults in the apartment above me every week. From what I could hear, the main purpose of her visit was to bring them supplies. I never saw them venture outside of their apartment only on a single occasion. They had made it a point to attend the dissertation defense of my remaining friend who was in the graduate program. I remember walking into the conference room and deliberately sitting next to the young female. She nervously put her finger on her temple after I glanced at her face and breasts. I didn't look away because I took pleasure in her distress.

Enchantment

My past hovered over me and projected its presence into my future as if there was something left unresolved. I knew that the follies that I had committed during my semester from hell had antagonized people at SUNY of Albany. I didn't know if these people expended effort at undermining my career, but for years I had feared their reprisal. My only comfort came from knowing that the department hadn't terminate my PhD candidacy. Instead, I was left to me to finish my degree.

I completed my dissertation in Two Thousand Ten. During the final stages of the process, I had lost the final draft due to a data failure. All that remained of it was a hardcopy that I had been submitted to the department. I didn't want to prolong the process because I feared that individuals or factions at the university would act against my candidacy. In haste, I uploaded a

rough draft that I cut and pasted into a Word document from a weblog that I used as cloud storage; after revising it so it was closer to the original final draft. The ProQuest service didn't allow for modifications to the dissertation after it had been uploaded.

Living at home with my parents, I descended into an abyss of isolation and loneliness. My sense of humor warped, and self-esteem sank. I frequently talked to myself and sang annoying chants when driving, mostly to distract my attention from memories of graduate school. Worse of all, I was living at home. I had heard of boomerang children, but they were mostly in their twenties. The prospect of still living at home another five years and entering my forties was terrifying. I couldn't defer developmental achievements, such as obtaining a job that afforded self-sufficiency. My life demanded radical change, but I found myself irreversibly moving toward a dead-end.

I clung on to a relationship with a woman as a means of maintaining social contact with someone apart from my parents. She was an eight-year younger heroin addict, who was Catholic with reddish hair. On our first date, we ate dinner at a Turkish restaurant. I flirted with her the whole time, listening to her tell stories about drugs, needle use, and abscesses leaving indents in her arms. She remarked that it was nice to be with someone who was nonjudgmental so that she needn't conceal her biography. She took me back to her apartment and introduced me to a man that she referred to as her cousin. She instructed the male in the apartment to depart for an hour and we proceeded to her bedroom.

Days following the evening, I interrogated her about her "cousin." She insisted that he was her real cousin, and I took her at face value. I don't know whether she loved me during any point in our relationship. There was always too much ambiguity, which made it hard to conclusively prove her deceptions. Years later I discovered that the cousin was not a blood

relation and that he and the woman had been involved in an open relationship until they got married. I was just another man whom she had in her pocket so that she used to support her addiction. The relationship had no possibility of burgeoning into anything authentic, but my frailty at the time prevented me from disconnecting from her. My reality was being constructed in bad faith. I had to extricate myself from it if I were to experience more than superficial satisfaction, but I felt a strong pull to cling onto what I had.

I had been working as a part-time instructor at the College of DuPage for a couple of years. It was nearing the end of the spring semester, during which I instructed two courses in sociology, Introduction to Sociology and Social Problems. When giving a lecture in Social Problems, I discussed drug and alcohol addiction in society. I argued that societies other than America practiced a method that emphasized maintenance as opposed to abstention for long-term addictions. I favored this method because it allowed people to remain as functional as possible without countlessly undergoing rehabilitation.

When entering the final stages of the lecture, I noticed a group of raggedy looking men outside of the classroom. A portly man with a t-shirt struck me as one of the two individuals who had set up a video camera in my Sociology of Culture classroom in Albany. I heard him say, "...Imagine taking that course." I didn't know whether to interpret the remark as an insult or a compliment. After the class ended, I made my way to my car. Over my shoulder, I heard members from the group of men question two of my students who stood outside. One man said, "How do you like your instructor?" I continued to my car, not turning around.

I used to take the woman from the Northside of Chicago out to dinner once a week. Because I was unfamiliar with much of Chicago, she suggested the restaurants where we ate. I remember arriving at an Italian restaurant shortly before it closed. We were the only patrons

apart from a middle-aged couple. Peering at the couple, I noticed Marge with a silver-haired male who roughly resembled my dissertation advisor. They were commenting upon my table's conversation. Marge had on a knitted, white cloth over her head, making me assume that she was Catholic. I was half-consciously aware that I had seen both Marge and her companion on previous occasions. When leaving, I took the opportunity to insult Marge and Stephen without speaking to them directly. Getting up, I mentioned how as a former bartender I hated people who tried to close out restaurants.

A year or two later I was eating dinner with my parents and the Northside girl in Frankfort. While eating, I could hear voices behind me. One was recognizable. It was the graduate student in the social work program at Lewis University. She asked a male who was presumably sitting at a table next to her, "Did you see those fat slobes at the College of DuPage today?" I assumed that she was talking to her brother. I knew that she was referring to the men who had loitered outside my classroom. I made a point of not looking behind me, so I missed the opportunity to confirm their presence.

Know thyself...

Embarrassing incidents at both Lewis and Saint Xavier universities made me reflexive of breakdowns in the workplace. I had learned that expressing my indignity in ways that were public was self-defeating, so I decided to reform my practices. Because sending flaming emails had cost me both part-time positions, I implemented a measure to prevent against future outbursts. My initial understanding of the meanings conveyed in communications sent by others in the workplace were often distorted. I noticed that my first interpretation of the meaning of an email could be malformed because I had glossed over some contents, failing to read the entirety of text. Some misreading of emails led me to incorrectly interpret the intent behind the

electronic letters and respond inappropriately. To rehabilitate myself, I made it a practice not to respond to emails and other written communications immediately. Rather, I waited until a day after I had first read the message before I responded to it. The delay gave me an opportunity to reread the message and form an interpretation of it in a different emotional state. My second reading was done more cautiously and with greater attention to detail, so there was less chance of me misinterpreting the meaning of its content and mistaking the intent behind the message.

My efforts at self-reform led me to reflect upon what might have been the cause of my meltdown in graduate school. I read definitions of psychological disorders, which exposed me for the first time to personality disorders. Narcissistic Personality Disorder stood out among the diagnoses because its symptoms resembled to some extent my behaviors during my last semester, living as a resident of Albany attending the SUNY flagship school. I must have appeared grandiose and arrogant, which others might have thought were signs of narcissism. My drug addiction and my inability to realize my growing dysfunctionality might have been what stood behind a tendency that I had to blame sources other than myself for my performance problems.

The absence of a social life, a state that began after inviting my father to live with me, also played a role. I no longer felt comfortable socializing with others in the program. Isolation caused me to feel boredom and loneliness. I learned to tolerate my lack of social interactions with others by anticipating future satisfaction and fulfillment. Additionally, Adderall for some time had been my drug of choice. I knew from reading the conclusions drawn by people who claimed to have clinical experience that stimulant use was associated with narcissistic personality disorder. I assumed this was because stimulants incited a sense of invincibility which served as insulation for those with NPD from the reality of their mediocrity.

I read a couple of psychoanalytical articles on Narcissistic Personality Disorder after I had first discovered the possible existence of the disorder. One of the articles described its childhood symptoms. Children who had the personality disorder were described as empty shells, who remained mostly solitary during their childhood. I conjectured that they remained aloof until the time that they experienced mood elevation and entered a state of hypomania. The heightened mood occurred after they had reached a stage in their life when they could enjoy the career success that they anticipated during their childhood. The problem was that people with NPD had a personality defect that caused them to overestimate their own abilities. The personality flaw affected their judgement and resulted in the adoption of long-term objectives that required competencies that they didn't possess. Their overestimation of their talents resulted in life-altering failures, causing them to realize that they had a shortcoming that made them unfit for society resulting in suicidal ideations.

I also gathered that the treatment of NPD proved challenging because the patient/therapist relationship often ended quickly. There was literature suggesting that the relationship could be sustained by the patient falling in love with his therapist. It was believed that it was almost necessary for the relationship to be sustained and for therapeutic progress to be made. The therapy sought to alter the lifestyle of the patient by teaching him to substitute mundane activities that offered mild pleasure, for long term aspirations and the exhilaration and the exhilaration that it incited.

I considered that the deferment of accomplishments might be ascribable to most graduate students working on their dissertation. Additionally, I was drug addicted, and in denial of my problem, which prevented me from acknowledging that drugs were impairing my abilities. I blamed sources other than myself for the problems I was experiencing. Early on, I assailed the

sociology department, but my need to find fault in others redirected itself upon increasingly larger, and more distant things, eventually reaching the point where it focused in on the United States Federal Government. In a correspondence with my friend from graduate school, I described my reflections and how they caused me to consider the possibility that I had NPD but noted that I didn't have the disorder's childhood symptoms. I had a well-rounded childhood with attentive parents. I had a variety of interests and pursuits as a youngster and an active social life.

Encroachment

When suffering sleeplessness, I sometimes made my way slowly through the kitchen and into the den where idol computers hummed. The darkness disturbed me, so I often moved outside of the office to the light of a hallway that connected the office to the kitchen. Standing there motionless for a time, I heard muffled voices. I strained to decipher the words that were being spoken, but despite my efforts the speech was at such a volume that it was unintelligible.

I regularly consumed large doses of Adderall. Because chronic abuse of amphetamines was known to cause delusions and hallucinations, I was unconvinced of the reality of the voices. Even more, when I took Abilify regularly for extended periods, the intensity of the sensations lessened, and I was not as concerned with them. Because of the uncertainty of their reality, I bracketed the phenomena. I left them in a liminal position between imagination and reality. I didn't entirely dismiss them, but for the time being, I tried not to allow them to affect my judgments and decisions. I did compare the conditions under which the sensations took place to other experiences that I had possibly hallucinated, so I could more easily recognize hallucinations in the future.

Figures and Backdrops

Trying to manage time, I asked the students what I could have done better as an instructor. Some of students said that I showed no interest in getting to know them. I appeared detached and personally inaccessible. I responded to their criticism by using the final class to give them an opportunity to speak about themselves and ask questions of one another. I promised to bring beverages and food.

After making the announcement, I had a few minutes before class ended, so I reviewed materials that I had covered in the lecture. As I was explaining something, I heard footsteps in the hallway getting louder as if somebody were approaching. The classroom door was shut, so I focused my eyes on the small rectangular window on the classroom door. A dark shadow passed as I heard a voice from the hallway shout, “The teachers getting _ired...” The last word in the remark was either “fired” or “hired.” I held off trembling and channeled my effort toward maintaining the flow of the lecture.

The peculiar event left me with the impression that I was the subject of experimentation. Whoever was responsible for the jolting experience intended to observe how I would react. Nobody had approached me about a fulltime position. The conclusion that the final word in the statement was, “Hired,” depended upon an overestimation of the value that I had as an instructor to the institution. Resenting my exploitation as a part-time adjunct, I had done little more than satisfy my contractual obligations. Therefore, the word in question was more likely “Fired,” and the utterance announced my termination. Although more plausible, such an interpretation was still not likely. The quality of my work didn’t fall under the standards of gross negligence or gross incompetency, criteria for dismissal that are often stipulated in faculty contracts. The experience revealed nothing about my prospects at the institution. I left the job without an offer of

fulltime employment. The college didn't remove me while I was under contract, but it did fail to offer me courses the next semester.

What ultimately concerned the agents probing my psychology? The oddities that I thought I had witnessed at the private Catholic universities, Saint Xavier and Lewis, offered indirect support for the possibility that I was a research subject for experimenters who operated outside conventional ethical boundaries. They experimented upon me with no informed consent and didn't debrief me after they had exposed me to the conditions entailed by their experiment. For all I knew, the experimentation was done to refine techniques designed to inflict harm, advancing the technology so it was even more lethal next time it was deployed.

Social Authorities

I dropped off my female companion in the Northside of Chicago. She was walking ahead of me toward her apartment when I heard someone softly say, "She's dating other men...she's dating other men." I looked around to identify the source of the voice. Across the street, I saw four faces looking out of a third-story window. They were young, maybe in the early twenties. It didn't register at the time, but I later realized that the female whom I had heard speaking to me was my former upstairs neighbor at the Dear Valley Apartment Complex. It was young woman who had attended my friend's dissertation defense at the Albany sociology program.

As far as I was concerned, my relationship with the Northside woman was over, so I started walking away from her to my car. After a few steps, however, I questioned the veracity of my experience. Where they indeed taking to me? How would they know whom she was dating? It all seemed improbable, so I turned around and went up the outside landings to the woman's apartment.

She didn't have me stay for long. I kissed her goodbye, and I returned to my car. Inside the console, I had a packet of herbal incense. I stuffed it into my marijuana pipe and began smoking it. It was a new blend that I had not sampled before. Predictably, it took a few moments to affect me. Suddenly, I became lightheaded and feared passing out. I had experienced this sensation before while driving. I repeated the mantra, "Maintain a steady pace...maintain a steady pace...look for brake lights ahead of you..."

It was a dangerous situation until a force took hold of me. I began thrusting my pelvis forward toward the dash in an erotic motion as I held the wheel. Suddenly, I felt relaxed and confident about my driving. The danger had passed. I speculated that something mystical had taken place. Exploring the possibility that it was a spiritual experience, I speculated that whatever caused me to gyrate couldn't have been the Christian god. Surely, he wouldn't announce his presence in a way that suggested anything sexual.

I thought the unlikelihood of a Christian god's intervention into my life to be fortunate. The prospects of an omnipresent, omnificent god unnerved me. Such a power entailed a totalitarian presence that made me feel suffocated. I don't remember considering the cause of what I experienced to be mental illness. Since there was no obvious antecedent, I bracketed the experience. I put it aside until I could determine if it was a hallucination or, contrarily, something real. I wasn't foolhardy enough to behave as if I were the subject of divine intercession, so I didn't take that possibility into consideration when forming judgments and making decisions.

I was smoking herbal incense in prolific quantities and my Adderall addiction had thwarted sleep on consecutive nights. When in such a state I anticipated mild hallucinations and paranoid delusions. I was inclined to accept these misleading impressions of reality as symptoms of sleep deprivation and stimulant abuse.

I looked for certain conditions to be present when deciding if I had a hallucination. If I noticed a conversation that seemed to come from a space opaque to me such as behind a door, I marked the sensations as potentially hallucinatory. If I thought that people in my vision were talking about me, I evaluated the proximity of the party to where I stood and the likelihood that I could overhear their voices. I never approached the participants to directly question them so I could see if what I was hearing was real. Rather, I looked for indirect evidence for what I thought I had heard, such as events that might be anticipated from what was said in the conversation, which I had flagged because I was unsure of its reality. The involuntary movements that I made in the car, however, were a different sort of phenomenon. Never had I felt as if I had been acted upon from something distant.

My relationship with the woman from the Northside of Chicago rapidly deteriorated. I tried making myself break up with her on multiple occasions. However, in each instance, I came to regret it after loneliness replaced the momentary adrenaline that I felt after making the life-altering decision. After a few days, I made overtures of reconciliation to the woman. Before resuming the relationship, she forced me to make concessions. She made it clear that she intended to profit as much as possible from the relationship. I couldn't consciously process what was so plainly evident. The conclusion that it wasn't a real relationship was suppressed in the back of my mind, and it remained unconsidered, because I hadn't the strength to reflect on it. Such a reality could destroy what self-esteem I had left.

I found myself driving under these conditions to a museum in Chicago, a trip planned by the Northside woman. She had recently reenrolled in a college and needed to do a project for an anthropology course that required taking pictures of exhibits. After we picked up her friend, I drove to the Field Museum. The plan was for the three of us to split up so to reduce the amount

of time needed to complete the assignment. When entering the museum, I heard behind me, “Is that Dr. Cole?” I turned around only to see a woman in her late fifties who looked like a professor from the sociology department from where I had received my PhD.

After going mad in graduate school, I had confided in the professor, telling her that, “...The sky was falling,” a statement that in my mind was a reaction to current events, such as the Iraq War. She had on a plain looking dress and white stockings when I had sought her advice. In the present circumstance, the woman, who appeared to be her, was talking to the cashier who had just transacted my payment. Weary of hallucinations, I refrained from saying anything; instead, I climbed the steps with my companions.

I had a challenging time getting my portion of the project completed. I defecated twice, both times resulting in overrun toilets. Even worse, my belt broke so my pants kept falling. I eventually bought a necktie from the gift shop that I looped around my trousers. After securing my pants, I began searching for the Northside woman.

When walking through a hallway through one of the exhibits I heard behind me, “Don’t turn around...don’t turn around...” I looked back to see two males and two females walking side by side. They were expensively dressed. No doubt, they were the young men and women whom I had seen looking at me from across the street of the Northside woman’s apartment through a third-story window.

Severing Ties

I had started using a blend of synthetic marijuana that caused me to feel mildly nauseous. If I smoked it regularly, I experienced what I thought tantamount to wasting syndrome. I used my inability to stomach food as opportunity to lose weight. Over the next month, I lost thirty pounds. Even though I was only five foot eight inches in height, I thought that one hundred

eighty pounds was a good number on which for me to land, so after reaching it I began forcing down some food. I didn't want to rebound so I restricted my meals to reasonable portions of KFC coleslaw, a diet that I maintained for several days. Even after incorporating additional foods into my diet, my resolve not to gorge continued. My new appearance bolstered my self-confidence.

My interactions with the Northside woman soothed me because they always reinforced my understanding of us both working for a shared future. Nevertheless, I had a survival instinct that made me know that I had to awaken from a delirium. I had to make a total break with what little I presently had if I were to have a future with any fulfillment. I walked behind her as we entered a grocery to purchase food for her two dogs. I heard voices behind me commenting on how detached I looked. "This might be the end of the relationship," one of them said.

We purchased the dog food and proceeded to a restaurant for dinner. After sitting, she told me that she needed a ride to buy heroin from one of her dealers. She said that she would have more success breaking her habit if she used heroin instead of methadone, arguing that methadone accumulated in the bone marrow. She had the money, so I just needed to drive her. In the periphery of my vision, I saw the SUNY professor who had been at the Field Museum, seated alone at an adjacent table. She had her eyes on us as if she were monitoring our conversation. Her presence affected how I acted because I wanted to make a positive impression. So not to appear to be an enabler, I objected to the Northside girl's plan.

I had experienced with quitting hard drugs from my struggle with Crack cocaine in my mid-twenties. I explained to her that like crack one can't quit heroin by using it. She became infuriated and started calling me stupid. Saying nothing, I got up and departed. I drove off in my car and left her stranded with the expenses.

I felt adrenaline as I drove home. The rush inoculated me from the emotional repercussions of what I had done. Not paying attention, I missed the ramp to the interstate. I continued until it became clear that I didn't know where I was going. Now driving on city streets, I parked my car next to the curb so that I could get out and walk. I hobbled at first but as I continued my pace increased. I felt chains lifted from me, as if I had been freed, and my posture grew more erect. I said to myself, "The world is deified...everything is re-enchanted," looking at a patch of trees on the other side of the street. Nature once impressed me, so I decided to explore the patch. I didn't know any of the streets but recognized after reading a plaque that I had made it to Hyde Park. I rested my tired body by reclining on the park bench while contemplating a new life course. After considering that it was night and that I was likely breaking the law, I got to my feet and crossed the street.

I detected a woman's voice saying, "Is he going to go back to crack?"

A man's voice responded, "He is if he goes down the street." I saw in the distance men standing outside a corner store. I had been off crack for seven years and had no intention of using it again. Instead of drugs, for the first time in years I wanted to meet people. Working as a part-time adjunct didn't provide me the ability to have an independent existence. I was embarrassed that I was not self-sufficient and unable to live on my own, so I didn't attempt to establish a social life while living with my parents. After making my way to the street, I saw a restaurant, entered it, and ordered a soft drink. I listened to people in the background because I was the topic of conversation.

After leaving the establishment, I had no idea where I had parked my car, so I called my father to pick me up. It was going to take him over half an hour to get to me, so I used the time to call my brother. I explained to my brother that I had broken up with my girlfriend, calling her a

sociopath. My brother, who was a psychologist remained silent as I described my experiences. I ended the conversation feeling unsatisfied. My dad eventually arrived, and we searched for my car. We filled out a police report so that OnStar could be used for tracking purposes.

Paranoia

I noticed an SUV following me. Trying to lose the vehicle, I pulled into a strip-mall parking lot so that I could turn around. The multiple lanes and parking spaces momentarily disoriented me. It took me a minute or two of crisscrossing yellow and white lines before I navigated to the exit and turned into down the street. As I approached the highway, I caught a glimpsed of a man laughing in the driver's seat of the SUV.

My heart pounded and I had trouble breathing. It felt as if I were having a panic attack. I got off the road and parked at a CVS. I reached for my phone and called the department secretary at College of DuPage to cancel my afternoon class. Moments later, however, I decided to reconsider because I was the subject of surveillance, so I thought it unwise for me to act erratically. Moreover, I thought that whoever was following me might have benevolent intentions. I gathered my composure, reached for my phone, and informed the secretary that I planned to have class as scheduled.

The lecture was devoted to the social problem of prostitution in society. Walking around the classroom, I elaborated upon different positions that one can take on the issue. I introduced a feminist explanation for prostitution that argued economic marginalization forced women into the trade. I then introduced my own position, which I characterized as libertarian, by suggesting that individual women should decide for themselves how to use their bodies. Students participated in an ensuing discussion making the class a success.

At night, I paced in the kitchen of my parents' house, thinking about the things that had stood out in my experiences. The prospect of being the subject of an investigation was distressing, but my apprehension was accompanied by a faint hope that something positive was developing in my life. I felt that my abilities were too strong for me to permanently waste away as a part-time adjunct. Possibly others believed the same.

Erratic behavior

Driving home on the highway in Aurora, I noticed myself unpredictably accelerating and slowing down. My speed at times exceeded ninety miles an hour before I pressed the breaks. In the periphery of my vision, I saw a police car on an overpass. After I traveled under the overpass, I saw another police car with a flashing siren.

Perspiration ran down my forehead as I struggled with shaking hands to present the officer my license. He informed me that I had been speeding. After he walked away, I inexplicably opened the console and pulled out a prescription to a beta blocker. It had been prescribed for hypertension and anxiety. After taking the medication, I placed the pill bottle upright on the passenger seat. The officer saw me and requested that I get out of the car. Soon after, a second police car arrived on the scene. The officer who had made the stop questioned me as the officer who came as backup searched my car. He looked in the console and discovered a prescription bottle of Adderall.

I was informed by the second officer that I was to undergo a sobriety test. Following instructions, I kept my eyes focused on his pen-shaped flashlight as he moved to the right and to the left. After what had to be more than just one minute, I had to conceal my annoyance. He continued the test for what seemed to be five minutes, I started to softly chuckle. My feigned good humor made both officer's smile. I was let go with a warning.

Madness

On a conscious level, I realized that drugs caused dysfunction and dissatisfaction to my life, so I needed to free myself of drug dependency by resisting my use them. I didn't think of recovery as a desirable option because of the suffering it entailed, which motivated me to develop an alternative plan for counteracting my chronic, habitual drug use. It involved the reconfiguration of my lifestyle. I'd participate in more activities that I found enjoyable, so my pursuit of pleasures was diversified. By occupying my time with organized activities, I'd have less time to consume drugs. Drug addiction had colonized a considerable extent of my life. As an insurgency tactic, I planned to become more engaged in hobbies.

I wanted to help stop the Iraq war, so I attended a Green Party meeting on campus. After arriving, I was alarmed to learn that the meeting's agenda excluded the military conflict as a topic. Instead, the meeting was dedicated to the apparent controversy among members of the campus Green Party over the legality of abortion. I raised my objections to the topic. The urgency that I felt about the war affected my ability to respect decorum and I had the effect of making the meeting rancorous. Nevertheless, after the meeting had concluded, I composed myself and departed on cordial terms with party members.

After returning home, I felt a swell of indignity, so I emailed everybody in the SUNY Albany Green Party to mock their failure to treat the war as a prescient issue. I got angry responses from one or two of the members. I replied combatively. Soon, I was engaged in a full-blown flaming battle with the on-campus Greens. One of the members stated that I was mean-spirited. Responding that she was not qualified to assess the nature of such a religious object, I dismissed her characterization of me. The email melee ended with the campus green party leader announcing that she was going to block communications between irate members of her

association and me. I agreed that it was time to end the insults, saying, “I need to get back to work.” Later, I orated a letter from one of the Green Party members to my sociology of culture class. I ridiculed the author, whom I kept anonymous, for a logical contradiction in his argument. A few students expressed their own negative perceptions of the student political organization. Despite my inappropriate use of class time, I still had enough credibility as an instructor to keep command of the classroom, even though my behavior certainly raised concerns among students. I remember one female student looking at me with teary eyes at times. It was clear to her, I believe, that I was suffering the early stages of a meltdown.

After devoting a class to exposing problems with the campus greens, I transitioned to the current war that was being waged in Iraq. In nearly every class, I voiced my objections to the Bush Administration’s handling of the campaign in Iraq. I didn’t want to take the same track as the anti-war protestors who demonstrated a profound ignorance about which they spoke during the lead-up to the invasion. So, I decided to distinguish myself from them by recognizing that war was as a natural phenomenon, and it wasn’t war itself to which I objected. Rather, it was what I called the “prosecution,” of the war that gave me misgivings. I criticized the use of eighteen-year-old women leading convoys in conflict-ridden territory. Prefacing my remarks by saying, “I don’t have a paternal bone in my body,” I went on to describe how the placement of young women in extreme jeopardy caused me visceral uneasiness.

I introduced a simplistic polemic for why the Iraq war was ill conceived. The enterprise depended upon the assumption that Iraqis shared a national identity. I used standpoint theory to demonstrate that the identity of an Iraqi was an intersection of different standpoints in Iraqi society, including Shia and Sunni. The Bush administration had naively assumed that religious identities didn’t interfere with the social integration necessary for a stable Hussein-free Iraq. I

stated in class that if you must go to war against this country, then, at the very least, drop in the anthropologists first so that we can build an understanding of identity formation within Iraqi culture. As far as I knew, nobody else had articulated such complaints in a social setting that was part of a university campus other than maybe in the teach-ins that had been staged and they had already come to an end.

I thought it necessary to denounce the Bush Administration every class that I lectured. After spending time examining the behaviors of West Virginian troops who humiliated and tortured detained Iraqis, I moved on to a subject that shed light on the historical significance of torturing the captured enemy. I condemned the Bush administration for defying longstanding American tradition that began with George Washington's refusal to mistreat captured enemy. Using myself as an example, I stated that this practice had robbed me of my birthright, which would have made me an inheritor of the good will that ensued from the tradition that started from George Washington's precedent.

My polemics transgressed an informal rule that political journalists explained using mass media. During conflicts, Americans were expected to demonstrate only support for the military's war efforts. Criticism of military planning and its execution were said to comfort the enemy. I disregarded the practice because I thought America was descending into a crisis that had signs of what Victor Turner referred to as a social drama. If left unresolved, it could lead to the dissolution of American society allowing it to restructure into something unpredictable and potentially undesirable.

I was also under the impression that the American economy was in risk of collapse. Pointing out that growth to the American economy was largely dependent upon industries that produced goods of no enduring value, I mentioned that the American GDP grew because of

innovations in things such as the yogurt parfait industry, gimmicks that multiplied transactions but introduced little lasting value to society. I warned students that they should enjoy American prosperity while it lasted.

I found myself personally at war with the Bush Administration. I tried to provide my students with the skills necessary to resist tyranny themselves. So, I challenged them to intellectual contests in class. During one such match, I interpreted a student to have trumped me. I claimed to be crippled from his assault and insisted that he strike the death blow. I demanded that he, "...Knock me off my feet." After the annoyed student hesitated for several moments, I broke out into condescending laughter.

Expanding the scope of my criticism, I attacked groups other than the administration. I never bothered to explain why the new criticisms were related to my original critique of the Bush Administration. I chastised right-wing Christian groups for promoting abstention from premarital sex. I complained that girls who had taken virginity vows were more likely to have riskier anal sex, remarking that they had found a loophole in the contract.

I sensed that I had alienated some or most of the students and made some even resentful. I overheard two young women conspire to get me removed from my position because I had used profanity in class. I noticed three men around the age of twenty following me when I drove home in my car from the university campus. They remained visible in my rearview mirror until I doubled back. When in my apartment, I observed a carload of students outside in the parking lot asking another resident where I lived. I secluded myself from the outside world as much as possible to avoid the controversy that I had created.

About midway through the semester, I learned that the sociology department decided not to rehire me as the instructor for the sociology of culture course the next semester. My academic

status was my last refuge. It served as a stronghold against drug addiction's complete colonization of my life and its takeover of my identity. I voiced my disappointment to the head of the department, who offered little solace, explaining to me that I should concentrate on my dissertation.

The department then passed on me for another course that became available, introduction to sociology. I lost my composure and acted with hostility toward the department. I copied and pasted email addresses from a departmental email and posed the question, why do all the grants support research in fields such as criminology and demography while none of them seem to go to fields like critical theory? I ended the letter by stating that to answer such a question all one needed to do was follow the money back to its source.

Unfortunately for me, one of the members of the department privately responded. Implementing the same strategy that had forced campus greens to lose formation, I coaxed him into an imaginary battlefield by challenging him to a contest. After shielding myself from a few of his blows, I counterattacked. I interpreted the end of his remarks to imply that my letters were taken to be spam by their recipients and used his insult as a pretext to send an indignant warning stating that he must immediately apologize or face retaliation.

After failing to receive a response, I drafted another letter that I felt intellectually vanquished my opponent. I sent this letter, after removing his name to conceal his identity, to countless others in the department. I didn't consider physical violence as a means by which to reestablish the honor that I believed others to have taken. Resorting to violence wouldn't have been satisfying. Only acknowledgement of my intellectual abilities could reestablish my standing.

During a brief conversation with a member of my dissertation committee, I tried to explain the purpose behind my activist efforts. My oppositional politics were, of course, focused on the Bush Administration. The administration, however, was not the full extent of my concerns. I had identified the university as a focal point of power in society. It was a nexus in which disciplinary and bio-power met and micro-technologies were innovated. In a conversation with a professor in the department, I remember him trying to explain that universities provide many different functions. My ability to see things with nuance had given way to a reality formed only of totalities and binaries.

During the only Green Party meeting that I attended at SUNY at Albany, I had intercepted a waver, by accident, for a program referred to as “Quick Alcohol Intervention.” The waver was mixed among the litany of papers that I had scattered on the carpet floor. After forming a quick impression of what it was, I became infuriated. A male psychologist from Albany’s counseling department, who had treated me years back for drug addiction, I thought was responsible for the consent-waver to an alcohol-treatment program coming into my possession.

I drove to the university health center, where I demanded to see the head administrator. The woman behind the desk picked up the phone and said, “You better get down here.” A few moments later a man in a suite appeared with a walkie-talkie strapped to his waist. As soon as the man saw me, he grabbed his walkie-talkie and said something into it. I assumed that he was radioing for campus police. When he approached, I handed him the waver and insisted that he explain why it had been distributed to me. He told me to go upstairs with him, so I walked behind him. He whispered to me, “Why are you doing this?” I answered that I studied critical theory and suggested that what I was doing was an application of it. After reaching the second

floor to the counseling center, he told me to sit in a hallway chair. As I was sitting down, he said in an elevated voice, “Don’t hurt anybody!” I lifted my hands in the air and asserted that I wasn’t a threat to anyone.

The man returned, and I followed him down the stairs. He then asked to make a copy of the waver. I objected. The man grabbed the paper out of my hands and closed the door after entering a room. After supposedly making a photocopy, he returned the waver to me. At this point, two campus police officers had arrived. The officer who questioned me had a New York City accent. He asked me what medications I took. I responded that divulging such information was not in my interests and instructed him to stop asking me questions. We exchanged insults. His colleague, who had an upstate accent, interceded to mitigate tensions.

I later noticed that the waver wasn’t intended for me. Instead, the program had recruited an undergraduate student. He had signed his name on the form, but my haste had caused me to overlook it. My rage redirected itself upon a new target. I remained insistent that the program was an unwarranted interference into an emerging adult’s life, and it had the potential of damaging his ability to effectively self-actualize in society. The student might internalize the Twelve Steps, which I thought tantamount to a slave ideology, and be left obsessing the rest of his life over his potential moral failings. He’d remain inhibited and constrained by morality, rather than fashioning it and imposing on others.

After deciding to park at the campus police building, I learned that I wasn’t going to be arrested for disorderly conduct, but one of the officer’s informed me that my behavior was going to be reported to the dean of students. I made my way to the administration offices, so I could preemptively defend myself to the Dean. I was afraid that he might decide to take disciplinary action before speaking to me. When I asked to see the Dean, the secretary responded that he

would be out of the office for forty-five minutes. I requested a copy of the school's constitution. I perused the document and constructed a defense against possible charges. My meeting with the Dean ended with no disciplinary action. I don't know what his motivation was but during the meeting he revealed that the student whose signature was on the waiver was seventeen.

I eventually entered the campus security complex. The officer standing outside the office said, "Mr. Cole, we have been looking for you," and led me into the station. After he informed me that the medical director had banned me from the health center, the officer accused me of disturbing the peace referring to my distribution of a plaintiff letter that I had drafted so to pass out to people in the building. I asked him for a definition of the crime. The officer said that he didn't know the wording of the statute off hand, but he said that could look it up. I questioned how he could investigate a crime without knowing its definition. He ended our confrontation by escorting me out of the station. I left and started searching for where I had parked my car, but I was disoriented and had no success finding my vehicle. Having no other recourse, I solicited the assistance of a campus police officer and rode with him until we sighted my car.

In days that followed, I turned my attention to the orchestrator of the study. She was a psychologist at the counseling center. I assumed the role of an advocate for the student who had been recruited as a subject and claimed to be acting on his behalf. I gathered that I had antagonized important people after Human Resources invited me to a meeting under false pretenses. They blindsided me by threatening me with expulsion from graduate school if I didn't cease and desist. They told me that there was a woman who claimed that I had assaulted her in the building that housed the sociology department. During the exchange, the older of the two men, who stood behind me, asked what business of mine to interfere with a program that had

nothing to do with me. I claimed that I was simply practicing free speech and that it was my business because I was a member of the university community.

I asked, “So, this campus is now a police state.”

The elder of the two men in the human resources office responded, “That’s right.”

The younger man, who sat at the desk in the office, requested that I seek counseling.

Buckling under pressure, I agreed. When on the parking lot of the building I saw the older of the two men in the passenger seat of a campus police car. I was later outraged to discover that the psychologist, to whom I had been referred, was a woman who specialized in treating sexual-assault-related cases. The threat of an assault charge, however, didn’t faze me because I had determined that there was a class in session that occupied a room in propinquity to where the alleged crime was reported to have taken place. I asked the professor teaching the class if she had heard anything unusual at the time when the assault supposedly occurred. She responded to me that she hadn’t. After explaining my reasons for asking, she said, “I know what they do.” I remembered her once describing East German secret police practices that tried to make people think that they were insane.

At home in my apartment, I spent much of my time writing blogs that ranted about problems in America. I had constructed an MSN Spaces blog on which I posted incoherent public letters. The United States had begun using Guantanamo Bay for holding prisoners that the Administration defined as, “Illegal Combatants.” I decided to voice my objections by messaging the FBI. I perused the agency’s website until I found a form to submit tips about terrorists and possible terroristic acts. In the submission, I claimed that I had observed dark-skinned men on television. Despite how they appear, they were not the real criminals. It was the people responsible for detaining them who are the culprits. The United States Government illegally

imprisoned foreigners who had been captured by the U.S. Military. After proofreading the message for anything that might make it illegal, I submitted it into the form. As soon as I pressed the return key, a popup appeared. It stated that I had consented to various forms of surveillance only to have the popup message disappear after a few seconds.

Before one of my appointments with the psychologist to whom the human resources agent had referred me while waiting in the counseling center, an aging woman with permed hair that she had tightly knit, walked past where I sat in the waiting room. As she passed, she turned her head to look at me and said, “Asshole.” I knew that she was trying to provoke me to act aggressively. If my actions came to be perceived as threatening, it could result in a writ of protection against me, restricting my movement on campus, which would have made my doctoral degree impossible to complete.

Instead of confronting the woman, I said, “How uncivil,” and remained seated as I waited for my appointment.

The “asshole” incident motivated me to write an individual working in a state government agency whose identity I had discovered from an internet search. He oversaw the grant that funded the quick alcohol intervention program. In the letter to him, I argued that there were flaws to the study because of the possibility of reactive effects upon subjects. The school was already disciplining the students who were subjects of the research, so they likely understood their treatment under the program as an extension of their punishment by the university. Consequently, the student who served as a research subject probably believed that his responses to questionnaires needed to indicate that the intervention benefitted him. The recipient of the letter failed to ignore me. Instead, his response argumentatively defended the study. I wrote the bureaucrat back and sent copies of the email to others who worked in the state agency.

I was unable to observe the effect of the correspondences, but I assumed that the emails had created annoyance if not difficulty for the director of the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program.

During this tumultuous period in my life, I suspected that I was under investigation by the FBI and the university. I saw recurring faces, leading me to believe that I was under surveillance. When I had gone up a stone staircase that led to the Office of the Dean of Students, I passed a balding man in his fifties who had on glasses. He said, “She’s going to need to get an attorney.” I assumed that he had referred to the director of the Quick Alcohol Intervention. I saw him on a few subsequent occasions. When I was eating brunch with my family members who visited in response to my mental condition to offer support, I overheard a conversation take place between the balding man and a woman at a table next to me. The man insisted that I enjoyed getting people fired. The woman refused to agree. Listening to what they said, I attempted to engage in backchannel communications. I said in an elevated volume during my table’s conversation, “I did what I thought was right.” I also made a point of bringing up the issue of Canadian aliens who took jobs in America. I wanted to indicate that ethnic resentment didn’t motivate my opposition to an open border with Mexico, a position that I had articulated in a former class.

On weekdays, I frequented Bruegger’s Bagels for lunch. While standing in line I saw an unusually attractive brunette, who was approximately my age. I had seen her in passing once before on a university sidewalk. I purposively paid her no attention. Talking on a cellphone behind me, she said, “I don’t know. I think he might be gay.” I assumed that I was being experimented on. I believed that I needed legal counsel, so I pick an afternoon to walk the streets of Albany looking for an agency which offered free legal support. I never successfully found the agency’s office, which was nestled somewhere on ghetto streets, but I did manage to lose track again of where I had parked my car. I searched for the vehicle for hours. When halfway atop the

hill on Madison Avenue I saw the old woman from the counseling center who had called me an asshole presently standing amongst a group of people below. I heard one attractive, younger woman say, “Should we intervene?”

The elderly counselor said, “No.”

I turned around to continue climbing the hill. Twenty feet away, walking toward me, was the fifty-year old, balding man. As I approached the man, I made a cellphone call to my father and I said, “I need to be rescued,” going on to explain that I couldn’t find my car. I don’t understand the details of my intent for having him overhear my appeal, but I’m certain it was an attempt at back-channel diplomacy.

On a day that followed, I entered the classroom where I taught the sociology of culture class so to drop off a stack of papers that I planned to later distribute to students. I walked in on two plainly dressed men setting up what appeared to be a video recorder. I apologized for intruding and simply left. During the class that later took place, I tried to communicate to those monitoring my teaching. Dropping to my knees, I announced that I submitted to whatever authority had me under surveillance.

For a period, everybody in the department was cold to me, treating me like a pariah. Department members ignored me as I walked the hallways to conduct reconnaissance by overhearing conversations. At one point, I sat in the department lounge and detected a meeting taking place behind closed doors in the conference room. I happened to be the subject of discussion. When the meeting adjourned, the door opened and one female professor who saw me said, “...It’s like he has a radar or something.” The members of the department then exited along with the Dean of Students. I turned and walked to my mailbox. Looking in the slot, I noticed a pamphlet from the president’s office. The new politically conservative president of SUNY at

Albany had created a magazine covering his pedagogical philosophy. I looked at the mail given to other graduate students and didn't see the invitation. Apart from myself, it appeared that only fulltime faculty had received it. The invite was to the president's first speech to the university. I suspected that it was a ploy to humiliate me, so I didn't consider attending.

When walking to class I saw the man in his fifties along with a younger woman in her late twenties who had dark, short hair. She turned to the balding man and said, "Are we going to follow him to Chicago?"

The man responded, "No, we won't go to Chicago."

I later witnessed a mock firing of the short-haired, brunette, who was apparently responsible for distributing the waver to the minor. The middle-aged, balding man with glasses and the elderly female counselor appeared to be comforting their departing colleague. I paid attention to the termination for a moment before I proceeded to class. I had caused everyone at the state flagship state university to mock and degrade me other than one friend who remained loyal. While we sat together in my office, I explained to him that I had intercepted a waver for the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program. I suggested that it could use as an exemplar of the concrete workings of Biopower, since it targeted a group in the population. I was convinced that divine grace had endowed me with the document because I couldn't explain how it came into my possession. In my mind, what happened to me lent itself to a quasi-religious interpretation.

My friend departed when the head of the department entered. The chair of the department asked me how I was doing. I responded that there were two of me: a congenial version and a combative version. I assured him that I'd soon convert back to my previous congenial form. I shook his hand after promising to finish teaching my class that semester.

The university published the president's speech following the semester's end, which I noticed after I had arrived in Frankfort. I detected passages that subtly referenced remarks I had made in my MSN Spaces blog. He defended the architectural design of the university. I had ridiculed its structure, saying that it looked like a nineteen-fifties representation of what a base on Mars would look like. When constructing polemics against the director of the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program, I had argued that norms were arbitrary, and that one system of norms shouldn't be prioritized, leading to its naturalization. The President assured his audience that there were norms to which all members of society consented.

Although I never reflected on it, on some level, I felt that it had been victimized by bureaucrats who had molested me. Why was I followed by people who were on university property? Why did they attempt to influence my behaviors by staging dialogue that they intended for me to overhear? Living at my parents, I focused my retaliation upon the woman who called me an asshole in the counseling center. For a considerable time, I falsely believed that she was the psychologist who oversaw the Quick Alcohol Intervention Program. I knew virtually nothing about the woman, not even what she looked like. She served as symbol for me that represented practices in society that I had come to understand as instruments of power and discipline. To draw attention to the function that people like her had, I used the MSN weblog, into which I injected programing by using its HTML editor, I stuffed the HTML header with keywords, so my blog was included in the first page of search results for queries of her name.

Following my public humiliation at SUNY at Albany, I sought treatment from a new psychiatrist in the Chicago area. I described to her my condition again as schizoaffective disorder. I mentioned to my psychiatrist that I had suffered trauma when in graduate school. Never rendering much of what had happened, I offered vague descriptions of the behaviors

caused by my condition, referring to it as “meltdown” or sometimes as a “psychotic break.” The embarrassment that I suffered prevented me from reflecting upon memories of it. The pain and discomfort that the surfacing of such memories caused me to be reticent to say anything about it other than a few nondescript remarks.

I liked the Chicago psychiatrist because she wasn’t reluctant to increase the doses of Adderall. In fact, she had no problem using the medication for side-panel uses. In my case to counteract the effects of depression. At one point, she had me up to one hundred and fifty milligrams of Adderall a day because she thought it would be an immediate means of relieving the severe depression that I reported myself to have. For the large doses of Adderall that led to sleeplessness, she treated me with prescriptions to Seroquel.

Chapter III

I had no reservations about playacting in the basement because the dialogue that I had with the voices that I privately experienced seemed innocuous. I periodically tried to make sense out of what I was doing by applying terms to which I was exposed when reading a passage from Kant's Critique of Pure Reasoning. It was an attempt to explain hallucinations. Although the passage had seemed unimportant when I had read it, I found use for it in my present situation because it served as a framework for understanding what I was hearing. Despite experiencing the sounds as if they were products of my environment, they were really disassociated thoughts of my own that were fabricated by my cognition. I concluded that my steady use of synthetic marijuana had finally splintered my psyche. I had become schizo from the effects of mind-altering research chemicals. By accepting that I was in an abnormal psychological state, it followed that the voices were imaginary.

Trip Wire

The credibility of the interpretive framework for making sense out unusual sensations remained intact until one of the voices articulated an insight that resonated with unmistakable brilliance. It was too ingenious to have been produced by my own faculties, so it must have originated from a more formidable intellect. The interpretive framework that I presently used to explain my unusual sensations couldn't accommodate the presence of another intellect. After concluding that what I heard originated from an agency other than my own, I became receptive to alternative explanatory schemes, even if they entailed embracing different assumptions.

My interpretation shifted to maintain the proposition that the voices were real. I no longer considered my sensations to be hallucinations, so the sound had to be produced from somewhere in my environment. One possible scenario was that the speakers playing the sound of voices

weren't in my parents' house and were, instead, hidden inside a neighbor's house. I had learned that I alone found the speech audible. My explanation for this was that the volume of the voices was lower than ambient noise in my environment, so ordinarily the speech wouldn't be identified. I credited my ability to bring the voices to the foreground of my audio perception to my recognition that I was the subject of the conversations that I heard.

The possibility that the speech played from speakers in opaque spaces seemed plausible for several days. I entertained its likelihood until concluding that my local travels were unscheduled and sometimes erratic, making them difficult to predict. Staging sound production wherever I went was impossible, so one of the assumptions that I had, which underlined my present explanation, changed to the proposition that the voices were projected from inside my body. I now understood what I heard as both unimagined and from a source other than myself but one inside me. This explained how the sound was always present and only detected by me. It lacked the amplification to be heard outside me but, nevertheless, resonated in my inner ear.

I remembered undergoing a root canal that took an unusual length of time. I was half asleep during it, but during moments that I was half asleep I noticed that the dentist and his assistants had exited from the room on two occasions. They entered an adjacent room where they had a hushed discussion. It was not the first root canal that the dentist had performed on me, so I knew about how long the procedure should have taken, no more than an hour or two. On the occasion in question, the surgery took at least four hours.

Leading up to the procedure, I had been told by my dentist that his daughter was a student at Lewis University. He also mentioned that he met the dean of the Lewis social science department. My bizarre behavior was likely the topic of their conversation. She might have divulged knowledge of my outbursts. Furthermore, when learning of my dental history, he asked

if I had trouble undergoing dental procedures. After I described my fear of dental surgery, he suggested that he hypnotize me and conduct a regression so he could identify what had originally traumatized me, which although not an inconceivable proposal for a dentist to make, it was most certainly unusual, and it was unclear how it would alleviate the fear I had of dentistry. The trauma had already been incurred, so bringing it to my attention wouldn't resolve any lingering issues that it had created. The dentist's suggestion to induct me into hypnosis supported suspicions that I had that the voices projected inside of me were from a device implanted under an abscessed tooth. He was part of a group who prepped me to undergo an intervention that would use a transponder to amplify voices that would be used to hypnotize me.

Interpersonal Relationships

I grew annoyed with my father during a conversation in which he kept providing background without developing a story. I suppressed the urge to yell. I recognized that my annoyance was out of place. It was too intense for that scenario. The force operating in my unconsciousness wasn't inanimate. There was an intent behind it. The force wanted me disconnected from my interpersonal relationships. If compelled to act destructively by the force, I'd find myself isolated and vulnerable.

Token Appearances

Walking from the massive parking lot to the classroom where I instructed Social Problems, I heard behind me, "So, who is Michelle Foucault?" It was a community college and mention of Foucault was rare, so hearing the name caused me to look back. I saw a fellow with a sports jacket and no tie. He dressed the role of a professor. He was accompanied by a strikingly beautiful, redheaded woman. She had posed the question to him. I had seen her before on two oc-

casions. I passed her in the hall during our first encounter and I had walked past her in the parking lot a few days later, both times as I was exiting class. Her white stockings stood out in both memories. I wondered if she had tried to attract my attention by asking a question about a philosopher who sometimes served as the subject of my lectures.

I entered the classroom early so I could make a phone call before class. During the call, I had to spell my name. I avoided confusion by enunciating a word that started with each of the letters in the spelling of my name. When it came time for me to use a word for the letter, “U,” in Russell, the name, Ulysses, came to mind. While on the phone I heard the professorial-looking man and the redheaded woman talking about me from an adjacent room.

The class was devoted to the qualitative research method called ethnography. As an unusual example, I played a professional reading of Caesar’s *Chronicles*. I cautioned that Caesar’s writings were intended to be a contribution to military intelligence and to call it ethnography was anachronistic, but his descriptions of the different tribes that he encountered could be treated as ethnographical. At least for purposes of providing an example. The audio began with the sound of a legion marching followed by a reading of the first chapter by a Shakespearean actor with a British accent. I heard the professorial-looking man in the adjacent room say, “He might be losing it again.”

Mania

I felt an intellectual charge. The energy and enthusiasm that I had was greater in intensity than what it had been during my mania in graduate school. My self-confidence soared, making me grandiose enough not to second-guess myself. I acted without reservation. The lack of inhibitions amounted to impetuosity. Sitting at my computer, I decided to send an email to the Albany sociology department to apologize for my past behaviors. It was a personalized letter that

would've likely caused its readers to cringe. Fortunately for me, however, it was blocked by the university's server. With the same lack of forethought, I sent some correspondence to my dissertation advisor in which I asked for forgiveness. I regretted using a Creative Commons License on my dissertation so that it was open access, reproducible and distributable without restriction. I had come to the realization that my decision created a potentially embarrassing situation for the department. Making the problem worse, the dissertation that I had uploaded to be published on the ProQuest server was not the final draft but a rough draft. I had submitted the file in the aftermath of a data failure that I had caused on my computer by attempting to convert my hard drive to a RAID format to quicken its boot up time. I had made a backup of the dissertation on a G1 SSD flash drive before attempting the conversion, but the flash drive failed immediately after. I was forced to recover most of the dissertation from a weblog on which I had published the document as a cloud-based backup. I believed that my publicly available dissertation reflected poorly on the department, so as a solution I proposed doing rewrite of it. My dissertation advisor kindly refused my suggestion.

I opened a new Facebook account with my name on it. I posted on it a picture of Apollo as an advertisement for a writing project, my memoirs, which I planned to get underway. I hastily began writing and found the work consuming enough for it to occupy me for hours at a time. I wanted the writing to describe as much about myself as possible. I had no inhibitions or reservations about what I wrote. My fingers lead the process by pressing the keys with no planning or foresight. I completed chapter after chapter to a manuscript that I entitled *A Pagan Christian's Handbook*.

The first chapter described my psychodynamics. In it, I explored my relationships with women. I concluded that I enjoyed women sexually dominating me but needed to have ultimate control of the relationship. I desired to be a sub with a dominatrix as my slave.

The other chapters had pagan themes. One chapter was entitled Pittsburgh is Sparta. In it, I compared different aspects of Pittsburgh to ancient Sparta. I argued that both had wealth distinctions among their citizens, but they remained relatively classless. I then compared Pittsburgh to New York City. I hinted that New York City was the contemporary incarnate of ancient Athens. I drew a distinction between the two cities by conducting an analysis of the word, "Classy." It was used differently in the two vernaculars. In Pittsburgh, the word signifies an organization that does things the right way. If it were in the economy, the organization would be customer-centric and have employees that went out of their way to solve customer problems. In New York City, the word referred to extravagant décor.

Men Are Goats and Women Are Squirrels made the case that anthropological truisms shed light on the different characters possessed by men and women. Men have better senses of humor because good humor compensates for unattractiveness. Men look outward and seek adventure. The strengths of women include hording resources and the avoidance of placing what they already have under risk.

In chapters, such as Little Calvin, I recalled Anti-Catholic polemics that I voiced during classes that I had taught at Lewis and Saint Xavier universities. I began to unravel the layers of memory from the madness that I began suffering shortly after becoming an ABD in graduate school. I completed the entire project, a hundred and twenty pages, in a day and a half.

I believed that the manuscript was a masterpiece and decided to send it to the two people that I wanted to reward: my friend from graduate school and my brother, the psychologist. The

former responded to me quickly, stating that he had read it two or three times. My younger brother, the PsyD, never responded. I didn't send the manuscript to sociology faculty at SUNY. Although my behaviors were overrun with acts of impulsiveness, my executive function, even in diminished form, continued to curtail some impulses. Something held me back from making decisions that might further harm my career. This marked the beginning of my effort to regain my impulse control.

Breadcrumbs

My psychological state didn't permit me the patience required to read dense literature. I hadn't done any close readings for a few years and feared that my lack of mental exercise had dulled my intellect. This didn't, however, prevent me from retaining what was communicated in the form of the spoken word, so I stimulated myself with audio books that were written by scholars of ancient history. I particularly enjoyed works on Classical Athens and on Late Republican Rome. I loved the biographies of great figures from the two classical periods. While sitting in my father's car, I turned down one the audio books that was playing and looked at him and said, "I think I was meant to live in Antiquity."

Interviews

I received phone calls from two members of hiring committees, both of whom offered on-campus interviews. The first was for a position at a college in Nevada that had the trappings of a liberal arts institution. What made it unusual was its emphasis of its mining program. The college offered me a first-class flight to the school for an interview.

While on the plane, I noticed that I was under observation. The woman, whom I had noted talking to Barbara from across the street, sat a few rows in front of me. I was unfamiliar with her male companion that sat next to her. As they were waiting to exit the airplane after

touching down in Nevada, they expressed uncertainty about their new time zone. I tried to help but erroneously suggested that it was now Rocky Mountain Time. The man turned to the rotund woman and said, “Is he mocking me?”

“No,” she responded in a beleaguered voice, “He’s trying to be nice.”

I made my way down to ground transportation so to rent a car. Waiting in line, I saw two men in suites. Their stiff appearances made them look like investigators. I stood there and smiled because I wanted to demonstrate that I wasn’t oblivious to my surroundings and that they stood out. I dealt with the person at the counter and started toward the rental car that she had assigned me. Behind me I saw that the two men had moved within a few feet from the counter. After a few moments, one the men said, “We couldn’t get anything.”

The next day I ate lunch with the hiring committee. A middle-aged woman, who chaired the committee, went out of her way to point to the legal brothel that was across the street from where we ate. The committee members claimed that the restaurant was their favorite. Although none ordered it, they spoke highly of the spare rib sandwich. Ignoring their advice, I ordered something else. The folksiness of the committee members seemed excessive, and their facial expressions sometimes looked contrived. A bald man in his thirties, who claimed that he was a biologist and an experienced mountain climber, kept glancing at me with a sinister smile. None of the committee members had advanced degrees and the conversation at the table had an unnatural tempo, as if under-rehearsed points were being covered.

I concluded that something was wrong. I assumed that the academic impostures were private investigators or unimpressive actors who had been hired. I remained quiet during the preponderance of the meal, responding only to an occasional question. At one point, a white-haired, heavysset man with glasses, who was seated at a table behind me, tried to talk to me after

overhearing me say that I lived in Frankfort. He mentioned that he was from a nearby town in Illinois. He resembled my first-year advisor from Lafayette College, a sociology professor who took interest in me after learning that I too had been raised in Western Pennsylvania.

The presentation that I gave had a surprisingly large audience. The hiring committee chair, who had planted in my mind the idea of a brothel, pointed out to me two teleconferencing cameras that were positioned to shoot me from different angles. I peered into the monitors that displayed video from the other end of the teleconferencing and saw nothing other than empty tables. I gave a brief and uninformative talk. For whatever reason, they had assigned me a topic from psychology, recent developments in identical twin research. I ended the presentation five or ten minutes early.

After returning home, I suspected that there was an ulterior purpose to the teleconferencing cameras, so I sent the vice president of human resources an indignant request for the video. I wanted to discover why teleconferencing was so critical, considering that nobody had appeared present on the other end. A dean that I had met briefly but who hadn't attended the interview, or the presentation called within minutes and said, "Well, I can't offer you the position."

Before listening to his explanation, I said, "Glad to hear it, but thanks for contacting me. I appreciate it," and hung up.

Another college called me to arrange an on-campus interview. I nearly blew this opportunity as well because I saw the chair of the committee having a discussion with a police officer as I waited for him to greet me. This time I suppressed my paranoia and acted as friendly as possible. During the interview, the committee chair, who had been assigned the task of reading my dissertation, told me that I was an ethnologist. I interpreted what he had said as a

compliment even though my degree was in sociology. The position was a one-year instructorship, but I was assured that they intended to hire an assistant professor of sociology the following year. I was told that I'd be well positioned in the hiring process. I left with the impression that I had interviewed well. The next day I received a phone call and offered a job. Relieved to finally live on my own, I prepared to relocate to a small isolated town that was in southern Ohio.

PTSD

I awoke with a rush of energy. My body felt as it did when I was an undergraduate. Peering at the mirror in the upstairs bathroom, I concluded that I looked ten years younger. As I raced downstairs into the living area of the house, I could overhear three women commenting on me and what I was doing. The women whose voices emanate from in the background seemed ecstatic over recent changes. As far as I could tell, the three were British, they worked for a newspaper, and they were tickled to death over my health. Mental illness and hard-drug use had taken its toll on me, but I appeared revitalized.

I took a pause from my activities to look at the SUNY at Albany website. An announcement was prominently placed on the homepage. I had long believed that it was Cimini had called me an asshole in the counseling center. Apparently, according to the press release she planned to retire after she had met with the president, Barack Obama. This information was more than anything that I had bothered to learn about her. She had never been more than a face that stood for Biopower and the micro-technologies that concretized it. Other than her role as what I had called a Biopower technician, I knew little about her. For the first time, I was exposed to a photograph of her, which caused me to realize that it wasn't her who had walked past and had called me an asshole.

I paused after I read that she was partially blind. My first reaction was to dismiss her claims to be disabled. I failed to consider the implications of her picture and recalled the mock firing that was staged during the semester that I taught sociology of culture. When walking to the class, I saw whom I thought to be Cimini standing next to her two colleagues. They were positioned about thirty yards away in the direction of the health center. The elderly woman and a balding, male companion in his late fifties or sixties were in the process of terminating a younger woman with short brown hair because she almost recruited a minor to be a human research subject in the quick alcohol intervention study. I remained motionless until the woman, who had called me an asshole in the counseling center, looked at me and broke out in laughter. She then looked to her male colleague, apparently seeking confirmation that her interpretation of my reaction to their theatrics was appropriate. I simply turned around and proceeded to class.

I decided that I shouldn't continue to harbor animosity over the incident. I ignored my own victimization and voiced regrets to my father that I had potentially berated a woman who was disabled. The thought of it caused me to begin weeping. He recalled some of my behaviors at the time and assured me that she hadn't suffered at all. Things more important than what I had done concerned her. I relented in my self-abashment and agreed with my dad that she was far too important to worry about me, noting that she had recently met the president.

Around midday, different voices became audible and followed me throughout my activities. One of the voices came from Todd. He was the man whom I saw walking with Meghan Lewis, the redheaded woman at the college of DuPage. It sounded as if they were beginning a project that had as its first objective the remission of my drug use. The help they provided me involved what must have been hypnosis. My mood had been elevated and my energy increased. For the first time in years, with the assistance of the hypnotherapy, I was

functional without Adderall. I was ebullient, energetic, and motivated. The only impediment that interfered with my functionality was my ability to concentrate when completing tasks. I remember spending hours trying to organize exams that I had graded into different piles on the floor. I finally heard Todd say, “Maybe he needs Adderall?” At that point, I resumed taking Adderall out of what I perceived to be a necessity. Tests and papers had to be graded and submitted. I had every intent upon tapering myself off amphetamine salts sometime in the future, but I needed a more opportune time.

I heard Meaghan and Todd discuss my need for a different form of treatment prior to effectively treating my drug addiction. They suggested that I had PTSD from the trauma I had endured in graduate school. Grandiosity had caused me to engage in an intellectual battle with members of Albany’s sociology graduate department. I had identified most of the professors as perpetrators of the offense of reductionism. They had not allowed enough space for qualitative research. Even worse, they were bio-power agents. They conducted research that contributed to micro-technologies designed to correct departures from normative behavior, a form of social engineering.

I took personal exception to their research activities. I, after all, had a personal stake in preserving spaces for deviants: people who needed ample autonomy or else they’d be forced to hide in the margins of society. Due to the combativeness of the communications that I had with members of the department, the point came where only my dissertation advisor was willing to talk to me. Fortunately, during my mania I didn’t harm anyone, and the department permitted me to finish teaching the rest of the semester and to leave the campus so I could continue writing my dissertation.

I faintly heard this conversation about me while on the couch in my parent's living room. Half awake, a comfortable narcotic sensation numbed my emotions. While half dreaming, the force began to coax me into confronting painful retentions. Each flashback was a thread entangled in a mash of toxic memory. The therapy consisted of exercises in which I was led through the images and dialogue from episodic memories of the semester. After becoming acclimated to the flashback, I reinterpreted the significance of its contents. Rather than assuming the worst-case scenario when assessing the consequences of my behaviors, I considered other, more benign interpretations of my effect upon others. The dialogue and images assumed different significations as if they were parts of a gestalt transformed by a switch. Sometimes I was persuaded to entertain multiple frames when reinterpreting memories. I refused to go further if I feared that a memory might cause me too much embarrassment or shame. When this happened, I was given encouragement from the force, pushing me to sometimes ignore my misgivings and confront the painful memory.

Following the treatment, my mind no longer raced ahead as if it were attempting to outrun the past, and I no longer endlessly struggled to distract my consciousness from poisonous intrusive memories. My behavior changed. I stopped mumbling, saying under my breathe that I hated myself. I stopped screaming and making weird noises that I used to divert my attention from memories that I sensed to be entering my mind. My overall understanding of what had occurred in graduate school altered. I was left with the conclusion that I was mentally ill. This new understanding of what had stood behind my behaviors didn't entirely inoculate me from the shame that had afflicted me for years. There were residual bad feelings. However, they were no longer so potent that they needed to be contained. I had the ability to face to reflect on what had happened.

Purification Ritual

I proposed that I quit Adderall to the intervention, but that didn't mean I wanted to enter recovery. The lifestyle that I planned included the use of cannabinoids. I knew that the herbal incense, or spice, was far less habit forming than amphetamines, so I'd use it to take off the edge while suffering Adderall withdrawal. My strategy was unacceptable for the people behind the intervention. They insisted that I had negotiated my way out of facing complete sobriety for too long and began introducing punitive measures to gain my compliance. I had concluded early on that such an intervention could only be justified if it sought to actualize what I already desired for myself. Because the intervention had objectives that I opposed, I distrusted the motives of those orchestrating the hypnotherapy and stopped cooperating with the usual affair.

Personality Composite

I sat at the kitchen table with a large plastic bottle of grape juice in front of me. Convinced that I was Apollo, I believed that I could turn juice into wine. I swirled my hand on top of the half-full glass to conduct transmutation. I then drank the inebriating beverage as I sat back in my chair. I dripped large amounts of honey into the grape juice and drank more of the cocktail. I consumed so much that I passed out, only to awaken with an upset stomach.

Hannibal

When sitting in the basement, smoking spice, I began to speak. I ranted, "I'll make a deal with this tribe...I'll make a deal with that tribe..." as if I were an Orthodox Jew from New York City, who spoke with a orthodox Jewish accent, which was a Semitic language. Although my behaviors were not rehearsed and had no planning, in the back of my head I knew that I was performing as Hannibal, who also spoke a Semitic language. After the monolog, I reflected upon what I had done and explained why I had neglected to display the traits typically associated with

Hannibal, such as his penchant for long-term planning or his piousness. Instead of doing anything cliché, I concentrated on his talents for diplomacy, which he demonstrated during his march through Gaul. During his campaign, he encountered numerous bellicose tribes. If Hannibal failed to persuade a tribe to enlist in his campaign against Rome, his campaign became the object of its hostilities.

Winston

Near the upstairs bathroom, I said, “Time to be Winston again...” Dropping to my hands and knees, I began doing pushups. After completing five of them, I stood up with sunken shoulders and a droopy head. Although I knew that I had performed as the protagonist from Nineteen Eighty-Four, I didn’t reflect upon the seriousness of the situation. Everything was surreal suggesting that there were no worldly consequences.

Schizoaffective Disorder

Since my early youth, I had panic attacks that were incited by memories of social embarrassment. The panic attacks began with the surfacing of an intrusive memory of some past social behavior that had proved awkward. The recollection of the event caused me to experience physical symptoms. My stomach cramped, and my body became paralyzed, leaving me motionless for minutes at a time.

I saw my first psychiatrist after graduating from college. I described to her the panic attacks and the childhood rituals that I once preformed as preparation for sleep. I had a compulsion to arrange things so that I thought they were symmetrical. If one end of a box was touching something, then the other had too as well. If I touched an object with the left hand, I needed to touch it with the right. The order in which the left and the right hands touched also mattered. The left/right sequences had to form a symmetrical pattern. After touching the object

with the left hand, I touched it with the right followed again by the right. Then, I touched it with the left, followed by once with the right. Then the left hand touched twice. The pattern ended with me touching the object a final time with the right hand. She diagnosed me as having obsessive-compulsive disorder. For my symptoms, she prescribed Paxil. She also prescribed Xanax to be used until I adjusted to the side effects of the SSRI antidepressant.

On a subsequent appointment, I described an experience that had traumatized me. It occurred during a campus visit that I made as part of a graduate school recruitment. I told her that I had suffered from an embarrassment that took place while visiting one of the schools that had selected me for its sociology program. I, at the time, suffered from shyness. The condition made me quiet and, at times socially awkward. I was so inhibited that I couldn't speak spontaneously. In attempt to avoid a potential social mishap, I rehearsed in my mind what I was going to say before contributing to what was being said; causing people to interpret me as tongue tied.

The University of Virginia had invited me to visit their campus and eat dinner with a member of the faculty and two graduate students. During the dinner, I discussed Tony Blair with the male professor and two teaching assistants. I had read an Irvin Welsh novel, who I now know as a profound delectant, in which one of the characters stated that the Labor Party Prime Minister was a neoconservative. I borrowed this assessment of Blair and introduced it into our group's discussion, but I failed to mention that Welsh was my source. The professor, who happened to be British, politely rebuked me. I insisted that Blair was, indeed, a neoconservative, and the professor again disagreed. The exchange lasted for a minute or two, ending with the professor stating, "You certainly know a lot about British politics."

I knew that the trip hadn't gone well, but I was shocked to find out that the University of Virginia had rescinded its offer of an assistantship. It was a tremendous blow to my self-confidence. I couldn't distract my attention from the incident and its possible ramifications. I feared that my reputation had been damaged. Thoughts of the event precipitated countless panic attacks and a series of restless nights.

After listening to my complaints about Virginia's treatment of me, the psychiatrist changed my diagnosis to schizoaffective disorder. She said that my prognosis was good. I had what amounted to a lighter form of schizophrenia. I exhibited a flat mood, she described, with paranoid tendencies. She continued to use Paxil for the treatment of depression and for social anxiety.

After several weeks, I adjusted to the effects of Paxil, which stopped making me feel uncomfortable after taking it. Most importantly, the antidepressant began alleviating the symptoms for which I originally sought treatment. I felt more confident and less socially awkward. Panic attacks no longer afflicted me. Despite improvement to my symptoms, I continued feigning anxiety to my psychiatrist to get prescribed more Xanax. My efforts resulted in prescriptions to higher doses of Paxil. Even though I abused the Xanax prescriptions, I always took Paxil as prescribed, because I understood it as a great benefit. It had released me from the inhibiting effects of social anxiety. When interacting with others, I had begun existing in the moment, free of the self-consciousness that interfered with my ability to perform speech. I socially interacted in what athletes call a zone. I didn't think, I simply spoke. Eventually, I was taking one hundred twenty milligrams of Paxil daily and continued to do so for years.

NPD Diagnosis

When teaching my last semester at the College of DuPage, I explained to my psychiatrist that I was experiencing another breakdown. My fear that my relationship with the woman that I was seeing wouldn't lead to anything caused me grief. The possibility that I'd never find fulltime employment caused me hopelessness. My psychiatrist looked at me and said, "Ed, I think we have to consider that you have narcissistic personality disorder."

In the back of my mind I knew that the treatment of the disorder entailed ending my use of stimulants. I responded with the question, "Is that character defining?"

She didn't directly answer. Instead, she looked at me sympathetically and asked me a question, "Have you ever hurt anyone?" I felt an urge to answer candidly, so I responded that I used to pick on my younger brother when we were small children and that I once nearly stepped on somebody's head after becoming frustrated in a soccer game. I couldn't discern whether the smile that she gave me was an expression of relief or disbelief.

I raised another issue by asking her to recommend a counselor or a psychologist whom I could use to resolve lingering issues stemming from my graduate school meltdown. She held out both fists. She looked at her left fist and said that one option was a psychoanalyst but cautioned that psychoanalysis could take some time before there were therapeutics effects. She then looked at her right fist and said that the other option was Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. I chose the latter. My psychiatrist wrote down a referral to somebody with whom she had just become acquainted. Located in Orland Park, the counselor was only a few minutes away from where I lived.

Dialectical behavioral therapy

Waiting for my first appointment, I sat in a chair positioned in the hallway. When the patient before me opened the door, I noticed that he had black hair and a mustache. His appearance reminded me of one of the members of my dissertation committee who had recently become department chair. After the man departed, I entered through the same door into a room and saw the counselor. I was disappointed. She was thin and shapely but oddly unattractive. She was in her thirties with permed hair and glasses. Her appearance reminded me of my aunt. When we began talking, she explained why a blanket covered her. Apparently, like my aunt, she suffered from a degenerative neurological disease.

To start, I provided some personal background. I informed her that I had recently received a PhD and that I worked in academics. She asked where I had instructed. When I said Lewis University, she interjected and mentioned that we had something in common. She had taught courses at Lewis while obtaining her master's degree in counseling, roughly around the same time I worked there.

I then described my symptoms. I told her that I believed that my personality was fracturing. I could see different dimensions of myself orbiting in my mind's eye. I asked her, "Do you think that I have multiple personality disorder?"

She laughingly responded, "No, you don't have multiple personality disorder."

I said, "My girlfriend says that I am autistic. is that a possibility?"

"No," she said.

I described my schizoaffective disorder diagnosis. She opened a thick book and flipped to the middle of it, saying that she needed to look it up. Knowing that she had taught college classes, I tried to compliment her by using to an adage sometimes heard in higher learning. I said

that to look up something was indicative of being a good professor. After I had made the comment, she turned her head from the bookshelf and peered at me before turning again to the shelf to pull out a book. I described how I was paranoid and that I heard voices of people who weren't present. Without ever looking at the page, she cavalierly responded, "Sounds like schizoaffective disorder to me," and closed what I assumed to be a diagnostic manual.

Although she seemed unconvinced that I would follow through, she instructed me to purchase a book on dialectical behavioral therapy before the next appointment. She then ended the session abruptly and sooner than I had expected. As I was exiting the appointment, she asked me, "How did you find the students at Lewis?"

I responded, "They were sort of brats."

That week, I purchased a book for patients undergoing dialectical behavioral therapy. Its intended use by people with personality disorders struck me as odd and the questions that it posed troubled me. I had never mutilated my body. I had never cut myself. I wasn't suicidal. The only question that seemed relevant to my situation asked if, "I lived in the here and now," or if I were always, "...Waiting until later to be happy?"

On the second appointment, I returned with many of the exercises in the book completed. She told me not to worry about the exercises anymore and cautioned that I needed to slow down. She pulled out a piece of paper with an empty chart on it and told me that it was time for me to make a weekly schedule. I remembered doing such an activity in middle school. I explained to her that the reason I went into academics and higher learning was that I didn't like to have my time rigidly structured. Therefore, it was better for me to work during times I felt productive.

She handed me a ball and asked me to describe it. I told her that it was translucent with orange pigmentation running through it in swirls. She told me that I was going too fast and that

my descriptions should be simpler. I tried once more, but she reprimanded me again. She said that I should stick to basics, such as, “The ball’s round...The ball is smooth.”

She had me begin to construct my memory house. She asked me what type of house I’d like to have. I thought of the most parsimonious architectural design of which I knew and responded that I’d like an English Tutor. She then asked what type of garden I would like, so I replied that I’d like an English garden, the only garden of which I knew that was unstructured. Although she treated me as if I were infantile, I remained committed to the therapy because I knew that something was happening to my mental wellbeing and at time I had nowhere else to turn.

On the third appointment, the counselor seemed taller and more attractive. She was dressed in a suite with pulled-back hair, and she smiled differently. We didn’t discuss anything directly related to my treatment, but she did tell me more about herself. She displayed a certain confidence as if she knew she were in control of the situation. The following appointment the woman resumed her original form. She made a point of standing while she described her young daughter. “She likes to dance,” the woman said, “...She likes to dance...” She made arm gestures to emphasize her daughter’s love of dancing. I didn’t have anything to say, so I tried to be polite by smiling. I inadvertently called her doctor as I left the session, which I took as the reason for the look of suspicion that she gave me. I planned to continue to see the counselor, but I discontinued the treatment because I was going to relocate to a new state after Wright State University Lake Campus had hired me for a one-year, fulltime position.

Analysis: Mental-healthcare diagnostic practices

Turning an ethnomethodological eye toward interactions that I had with the two misguided mental-healthcare professionals, one can note that there were intersubjective discontinuities during the intercourse. These lapses in shared understanding result from ambiguities in language. Garfinkel referred to these ambiguities with a term from linguistics, indexical. When providing denotative definitions of indexical, ethno-methodologists generally turn to writing and use of commonplace pronouns that prove to have multiple possible meanings.

During my appointments with mental healthcare professionals the lapses in inter-subjectivity ensued from actors leaving these interpretive conflicts unresolved. Lexicon and the expressions constructed out of them are not endowed with objective dispositions that give them meanings, so expressions with indexical words never have a definitive meaning. The indexical that created ambiguity makes speech and gestures that interlocutors externalize during their communications susceptible to multiple interpretations. For the meaning of utterances and body language to be mutually understood by those interacting, a shared interpretation of their meanings must be established through the ongoing, cooperative work involved in interactions. This work includes more than just interpreting the meanings conveyed by a counterpart, it entails the need to make oneself accountable. Social actors must tailor their behavior so what they mean is interpretable to counterparts.

As I am pointing out, the ongoing production of inter-subjectivity isn't without interruption. The time I spent reflecting upon experiences from my psychosis permitted me to recognize moments of intersubjective discontinuity that occurred during dialogue that I had with the mental-health professionals, both of whom treated me shortly before I entered full-blown psychosis.

There were moments when my therapists and I failed to accomplish a common interpretation of an indexical in our communications.

The lapses in intersubjectivity didn't obstruct the flow of social interaction, so the sequential turn-taking of question-and-response continued uninterrupted. Therefore, the phenomenon that I am describing had consequences that were different from the breaching experiments that were performed by researchers who had been enlisted by Garfinkel. The scenarios arranged by Garfinkel in these experiments included a researcher, who posed as someone assuming a role in a mundane social activity, and a subject who was unaware of the experiment. The social activities were tantamount to what William Graham Sumter had called folkways. The researcher deliberately neglected to abide by the norms that social actors followed when coordinating the behaviors required of them by the norms organizing the folkway.

Garfinkel was interested in observing the reactions of those experimented upon. Inferring from the results, Garfinkel concluded that people when faced with a such a situation displayed moral indignation. Garfinkel stressed that social activities, or folkways, had moral importance, contradicting the position held by William Graham Sumter, who had defined folkways as having no moral significance. The phenomenon that my own research exposed, what I refer to as intersubjective lapses, had different consequences than breaching experiments. Intersubjective lapses don't breakdown the interaction that is underway, and no moral indignation is observable.

Although it isn't apparent at the time, the inability to resolve ambiguities and accomplish shared interpretations of meaning caused unforeseen consequences. The span of confusion that is correspondent with the intersubjective lapse might affect what the interaction leaves behind, influencing subsequent interpretations of what took place. For that reason, the intersubjective

lapse can later provoke moral indignation if an interlocutor in hindsight concludes that a miscommunication or, perhaps, a planned deception had taken place that adversely affected his interests.

As an example, one can imagine a police interrogation. The individual being interrogated might answer questions while under the impression that he is assisting a police investigation. Only later does he learn that he made a statement that was interpreted differently than he had intended, resulting in him becoming a suspect, so he had, in fact, unwittingly incriminated himself despite not committing a crime. The intersubjective lapse in this occasion resulted in unforeseen developments for the man. He subsequently might express resentment over being manipulated or deceived.

Refer to the dialogue between Lamb and me in which she displayed a facial expression in reaction to one of my responses to a question posed by her. The smile that she made could have been interpreted to reflect more than one type of attitudinal state. The look that she bore after hearing the answer I gave might have betrayed either her disbelief of what I was saying or her or relief that my response wasn't something else.

The dialogues that I had with my psychiatrist in Chicago illumines how the speech and body language used to convey meaning, due to the ambiguity of indexical words, can be interpreted divergently by interlocutors. This is especially true if two or more interlocutors extend different interpretive patterns when making sense out of the indexical. An interpretive pattern is formed from the constitution of an object by the perception. The sensory data, however, received from the object can change, but what the object is will remain the same in the perception. Therefore, the stimuli from the object can be somewhat different than what it originally had been, but the perception will continue to constitute the object under the same concept or definition. The

changing stimuli received from the object will be perceived as the disclosure of details. Interpretations of changing stimuli of an object form a pattern; what has been referred to as a pattern of interpretation.

Ethnomethodology has used the following example. A coroner is conducting an inquiry of a dead person found in an apartment. The oven is found on with its door open. The windows are all shut, and a towel is placed under the apartment door covering the crease. *Prima face*, the evidence appears to suggest suicide, but what if it is also mentioned that the time of year is winter. The facts can take on new significations, now appearing as evidence of an accidental death. The person was trying to heat the apartment and the oven failed to ignite. Patterns of interpretations affect how we see and make sense out of details. When interpreting the meanings of certain utterances and gestures, that either she or I expressed, the psychiatrist likely extended an interpretive pattern that presupposed me as having NPD. I extended a pattern of interpretation of her as well, but the pattern didn't extend to provide the necessary context for me to make sense of the expression she made after I describe what included in my answer to her question. After she had blindsided me with her suggestion that my diagnosis should be changed, I was left in a state of bewilderment, so I didn't take the opportunity to ask her why she thought I had a need to disparage other people. She must have interpreted my response to be consistent with the traits associated with NPD, because the psychotherapy options that she suggested were the only two modes of treatment that were believed to have any therapeutic effects for patients with narcissistic personality disorder.

Next, we will look at my exchanges with the therapist, who specialized in dialectical behavioral therapy. Her nonverbal reactions to certain utterances of mine betrayed a tendency to interpret my remarks as disparaging to her. What I said was prone on occasion to be taken by her

as an insult or as condescension. Her reactions no doubt reflected an ongoing assumption that she held of me as a patient. She presumed that my personality had traits that paralleled the traits believed to be associated with NPD. When I told her that looking something up was indicative of being a good professor, she appeared to think that I had belittled her. What she did in response to my remark – turn around in a kneejerk reaction and look at me - revealed that she thought that I had insulted her for needing to use a reference material to offer a definition. Interestingly, I had intended what I said to be a compliment. I was commending her for her willingness to research the question rather than proffering an answer of which she was unsure.

When I inadvertently called her doctor as I left the appointment room, the look of suspicion that she gave me revealed that she understood the meaning of my use of the word, doctor, to be, once again, disparaging. She interpreted my erroneous use of, “Doctor,” by integrating it into a pattern established by the persisting constitution of me as an object defined as a subject with NPD, leading her to interpret the utterance’s significance so it reinforced the original pattern of interpretation. In other words, she took my use of the word, doctor, to have a meaning derived from being used in an insult, as if I were going out of my way to bring attention her lack of a doctorate. If her interpretations weren’t shaped by the underlying pattern formed from the impression that I had NPD, the utterance might have been interpreted as my willingness to disregard her lack of a high degree and, instead, hold her in the same esteem as a therapist with a doctorate.

Invocation

Driving in the parking lot at the College of DuPage, I reached in the console for my packet of herbal incense and packed a tobacco pipe that I used as paraphernalia so not to arouse suspicion. I got the foliage - spiked with research chemicals - burning and took the smoke into

my lungs. I heard the social-worker students voice in the background. She uttered, “Mumble under your breath...” Wind that blew from a source outside me flowed up my body and into my throat after which it pushed through my mouth causing me to enunciate words as it exited. I uttered, “Mumble under your breath.” From this unusual experience, I intuitively knew that a spell had been cast.

I drove home to my parents’ house and retreated to the basement to unwind. Sitting in an austere plastic chair, I stared at the concrete wall in front of me. Toward the left side of the wall, a black figurine appeared on the concrete. I first interpreted it as the personification of the crack addition that I had suffered during graduate school. I despised what I had become and wanted nothing more than to destroy the vestige of my former self. I yelled, “...I’m going to get you!”

The shadow became animated, jumped off the wall, and ran into the corner of the basement. Wavering momentarily, I decided to chase the specter. I remember shaking slightly as I forced myself to my feet. I followed the trajectory taken by the phantom. I continued until I reached the storage shelves and clutter in which it had vanished. Whatever it was, it had left its impression on the concrete. A black figurine was emblazed on the wall.

I learned later that the phantom was Sheila, the younger woman that I had briefly met at Lewis University. The figure on the wall marked the point where my memory house had been invaded by the childlike woman. Sheila elected to make a wooden snowman stationed in the storage of the basement, which was placed outside the house each Christmas, into a focal point. By remembering it, she could find her way back into my memory house. I often heard Sheila in the background singing, “Jingle bells...jingle bells...jingle bells.” Reciting the chant was a mnemonic used by Sheila to bring into her mind the focal point that she relied upon to enter the edifice that stood as an extension of my cognition.

Intervention

I came home from work and immediately marched down the stairs to the basement. An unseen interlocutor asked me questions about the social-work graduate student that I had met in the parking office of Lewis University. I found myself having a discussion with disembodied counterparts whose voices sounded as if they projected from a space that was a few feet away. They explained that they were members of the Lewis family, a wealthy dynasty whose patriarch had founded Lewis University. They took responsibility for my recent experiences. The Lewis family members were intervening into my life for the purpose of reforming me. This entailed drug abstinence and improved hygienic habits. The project was being done on behalf of Sheila. She apparently had fallen in love with me, and hoped the intervention would make me suitable as a spouse.

I insisted that they stop the intervention. I thanked them but pointed out its unlikely success. I believed that complete drug remission wasn't any longer a realistic possibility for me, so I used it as an excuse to decline their proposal. The family's extraordinary wealth did make the decision difficult. I considered myself to have been on kind of military campaign during my years of self-described madness. Although petty, spiteful, immature, and self-destructive, in my assessment, I had taken great risks to bring attention to the Bush Administration's mishandling of the war. Stress from the jeopardy in which I placed myself had prematurely aged me. I no longer possessed the energy and the attention span that I had in college and my first years of graduate school. Although uninterested in extravagances, I felt that I deserved leisure time and job security.

Memory House

The memory house that I constructed modeled itself on top of the structure provided by my parent's house. It became both a macrocosm of my cognition and an extension of it. The attic housed my executive function, impulse control, and reflexivity: parts of cognition responsible for managing tasks, regulating impulses, and analyzing what has gone wrong after a breakdown in an operation. My room, or headquarters, as I called it, held my perception, the faculty that constituted objects from the sensory impressions gathered by the senses. The extension of space called the living room, held my pre-reflexive consciousness. Downstairs in the basement, or cellar, where my bowels were stored, I established moods.

I first started learning how to use my memory house by regulating my intake of herbal incense. I didn't want to use the substance habitually, so I placed my packet of spice along with my pipe in the attic. When located in the attic space, my use of it was determined by my executive function. No sign of herbal incense was allowed in the living room, so my pre-reflexive cognition was unaware of herbal incense. The absence of spice in this space prevented me from using it out of habit. In the attic, I was forced to reflect upon its use before deciding to use it.

By accident, I learned that the objects situated in different memory house compartments affected my cognitions and behaviors. I made a point of clearing the attic space of clutter and red wiring, which I ripped out, that ran along its walls. Purging red from this space eliminated my migraine headaches and freed my mind of unimportant thoughts. Removing the clutter in the attic space allowed me to reflect more clearly. Carefully avoiding insulation that had no boards supporting it from underneath, I screamed racial epitaphs at the top of my lungs. Such acts externalize and make conspicuous prejudices latent in my psyche. Once my racial biases were

brought out, I challenged them and worked to counteract them by entertaining the plausibility of positive stereotypes, which came to displace the negative prejudices that had occupied space in my psyche.

The Lewis Family

Over the weeks that followed, the biographies of the Lewis family members were revealed to me. At the time, I didn't question the credibility of the accounts. Only later did the superficiality of the characters' development become apparent.

Sheila

After failing to fraudulently obtain a master's degree in social work from Lewis University, Sheila returned to Beverly Hills to live with her grandmother. She had pursued the advanced degree to make herself more viable as a politician. Despite her inability to claim to have completed her Master of Science, she was still bent on building a political career, which she launched with a primary campaign for mayor of Beverley Hills. She was so intent upon success that she was prepared to invest considerable assets from her trust fund to ensure her election victory.

Sheila spent her time giving instructions to the consultants on her staff. They attended to Sheila's needs by bringing her coffee and breakfast in the morning. Though they had some other responsibilities, their time was mostly devoted to ensuring Sheila's comfort.

After rousing from bed in the late morning, the vibrant politician canvassed the streets of the city in a chauffeured limousine. She instructed her driver to pull up next to expensive cars allowing her to gesture to its passengers in an appeal for them to open the window. She then spouted talking points that emphasized her commitment to plutocracy. Sheila continued talking until the other car resumed going down the street.

Sheila's fortune was steadily drained by the mayoral campaign. Following her defeat in the primary, she discovered that her inheritance only had a million dollars left. It was just enough to yield the interest necessary for her to live relatively well off the rest of her life. Sheila blamed the consultants that she had hired for not only losing her bid for the party nomination but for embezzling most of her fortune. She did worse than the expected voter error and nobody attended her concession speech. The failure was so demoralizing that she refused to leave the living chambers in which she dwelled in her grandmother's mansion. After becoming a recluse, she gained weight and contemplated suicide. The only source of happiness in Sheila's life was the hope that someday she'd still succeed in politics.

At Lewis University, Sheila's boyfriend programmed the answers to her tests into her scientific calculator, allowing her to effortlessly achieve high marks. The way things had been going, she could have completed her degree without much backlash. The dean who oversaw the social-work program purposively ignored Sheila's conduct as a courtesy to the Lewis family, who continued to be important benefactors to the university. Sheila, however, self-destructed. Following our meeting in the parking office of the university, her infatuation with me led her to precipitously dump her boyfriend. With him out of the way, she thought that she'd be free to pursue me as a significant other. I never learned of her romantic intent because her expulsion from Lewis University soon followed.

Planning our relationship together, she had contacted the university president to get me hired as fulltime faculty. She told the president, "He might even be your predecessor someday." When the president came to observe one of my classes, I detected that he and others were present and listening in the nearby classroom. I was resentful of people at the university monitoring me, so I changed my lecture topic. It ended up an incoherent diatribe critical of Catholicism.

The president was so resentful that his time had been wasted and alarmed that she had misused the word, predecessor, that he made it a point to read one of her papers. After looking at it, the president investigated her academic conduct. In the end, Sheila was found to be a fraud and expelled from the program. Because it was a terminal MS program that bypassed a baccalaureate, Sheila left with no degree. Sheila's revamped interests in me were designed to increase her favorability among potential voters in a future campaign. By marrying me, she'd appear more humanlike to the public.

Sheila was a lonely child. Not having friends, her time was spent dressing in expensive clothes and having nowhere to go. Meaghan and her friends never took Sheila's political aspirations seriously and routinely made fun of her. Sheila's only companionship came from Deidra. She was the youngest sibling and the most dysfunctional member of the family. The frail and uncoordinated girl followed Sheila around the house imitating her gesticulations and some of her utterances. Neither of the two girls attended school.

Sheila was diagnosed as having narcissistic personality disorder. The family was hopeful that Deidra had it as well, but the psychiatrists concluded that it was the worse-case scenario. Deidra was psychopathic.

Deidra

Deidra was an odd child from the beginning. She was cute as a baby, but as she got older it was clear that she had a disorder. A defiant child, every private school that she attended sent her home after she refused to submit to instructions. The parents tried to hire tutors for Deidra, but they were soon driven off by the girl's behavior. As Deidra grew older, her mother believed that she had a chance to be attractive, but her good looks never panned out.

Deidra had fallen in love only once. It was to a nice Italian boy named Domino, whom Deidra had met at a Catholic social function. The Albany counselor, who happened to be there, recruited Deidra and Domino to conduct surveillance on me while I lived in the Deer Valley apartments in Slingerlands, NY. They were young, but the counselor insisted that they were mature beyond their years. Deidra, after all, had proven her dedication to the project by reading a Nancy Drew novel as preparation.

The entire time they were on the job Deidra tried to seduce Domino. The boy was repulsed by Deidra's neglect to take showers and her unshaven, hairy legs, which were, fortunately for others, almost always concealed by the pair of sweatpants that she wore regularly. In any event, Domino had a job to do, and he didn't want to be distracted by a relationship.

Deidra received her trust fund after turning eighteen. A limousine had been called by her parents and was parked with the driver waiting outside so he could carry her clothes and possessions to the car, which were already packed. Deidra arranged to stay at the most expensive hotel possible, where she spent a great deal of money having exotic meals delivered. She once craved a buffalo burger, so she had it flown in from Colorado. Deidra also had a habit of hiring models her age as companions. In fact, the three young adults that I had seen with Deidra in Chicago worked for a Chicago agency. Some of the models were willing to chat with Deidra after the session had ended. The interaction typically ended abruptly after Deidra steered the conversation toward her thoughts of my destruction. Deidra quickly depleted her fortune. On the brink of homelessness, she persuaded her grandmother to take her in.

Meaghan

Meaghan was not compromised like her sisters. She was intelligent and good looking. She was also worldly. Her dad had sent her abroad to attend boarding school in France because

of her relationship with her mother. Marge, the lady of the household, was jealous and resentful of her daughter. Marge was not highly educated nor was she intelligent. Most vexing to Marge, she lacked the feminine charms with which Meaghan was so firmly endowed.

Meaghan was in her early thirties. She spent half the year in the States and the remainder of the year in Paris. The Parisian identity was becoming the more fundamental of the two. She was close to her father and her brother, Brian, but largely estranged from her mother and two sisters.

Brian

Brian spent countless evenings attempting to pick up women at nightclubs but reportedly had never succeeded. His money failed to compensate for his lack of charm and good looks. Growing up, Meaghan constantly chastised Brian for peering at her breasts while eating at the dinner table. Brian claimed not to be attracted to his sister, but Meaghan never let go of her suspicions. Despite the uncomfortable sexual tension, Brian and Meaghan maintained a relationship and bonded during family events by collaboratively mocking Sheila and Deidra.

Marge

Marge Lewis was a scarlet, who preferred relationships with younger men, but maintained her marriage with Stephan Lewis because of his enormous wealth. She had tried separating from him, only to blow the money from the settlement on gigolos. She had a love of prescription narcotics and was addicted to Vicodin. She sought recovery after she became middle aged, successfully remaining sober for stretches over the past few years.

Stephan

Mr. Lewis was a quiet, withdrawn man who was in a difficult marriage. His taciturn personality made him attracted to outgoing women; the reason why he married Marge. Mr.

Lewis had graduated from law school. Afterwards, he joined the National Lawyers Guild. He felt uncomfortable after meeting some of the inmates and defendants whose interests were advocated by the Guild and decided that he wanted these individuals to remain in prison.

His realization that he'd rather ramrod defendants than preserve their constitutional rights was a self-awareness epiphany. Not only was he a scared man, but he was also a psychopath working for the good of society. He used his position in the National Lawyers Guild to ensure the suffering of people whom he thought of as degenerates. He believed that no one would object because as impoverished criminal defendants they belonged to a powerless and vulnerable group. In addition to his lawyerly pursuits, Mr. Lewis had political aspirations. He commented on his political plans during dinner parties only to have the liberal-minded Meaghan act as a naysayer. She took it upon herself to embarrass her father.

Todd

Todd was a psychologist who had been recruited by Meaghan Lewis to assist in the intervention. Meaghan met him at a conference where he was scheduled to give a talk. Although Todd was married, he was successfully seduced by Meaghan.

Psychotic plea for help

Before leaving for Celina, OH, where the Lake Campus was located, I returned to my psychiatrist for an appointment. There were no other patients in the waiting room in which I took a seat. I overheard her office manager say that I was found befuddled in South Chicago, which was surely the explanation given to the secretary by my father who called the office so to make an emergency appointment.

After following her into her office and taking a seat, I began to explain that I was hearing voices, referring to sensations that started a few weeks ago as I spent time in my parent's basement. My psychiatrist asked, "During what hours of the day do you hear voices?"

I responded without reservation that "I heard voices every waking hour of the day," assuming her question meant how I was presently affected by voices not how they first became noticeable. At that point, I was suspicious of anyone treating my mental health or who had treated me, at least recently, for mental-health problems. Although I wasn't certain, I even entertained the suspicion that she was in some way responsible for my symptoms.

After leaving the appointment, I got in my car and turned the keys in the ignition. The car didn't start so I tried again. After the third attempt, I noticed that it was in neutral. The car didn't have its emergency break deployed so it was potentially dangerous for one of my parents' poodles that was sitting in the back of the car. I turned around and looked at the small dog. My initial suspicions were that the office manager put my car into neutral during my time in the doctor's office to get a reaction out of me.

I pulled out of the parking lot to begin the drive home. I had made it to the main road when I experienced sudden emotional despair. I felt trapped and frustrated from an inability to move freely. I could think of no reason for feeling such emotions. I sensed that the source was lingering just past the horizon of my reflection. I responded to the despair that I had by expressing my discontent. I stopped my car in the middle of the two-lane highway for several seconds.

ED Therapy

I sat in the chair in front of a table that faced the concrete wall. My head fell back as my right arm was moved so that my hand fell on my genitals. I felt as if people were watching me,

so I indignantly walked up the wooden steps into the kitchen. I took a moment and thought about what had happened. It all seemed harmless, so I started laughing. I had just been introduced to a disembodied Meaghan Lewis, the woman whom I had seen three times at the College of DuPage.

Meaghan's work in the intervention consisted of rehabilitating my penis so I could again achieve erections. I masturbated as she whispered behind my head, suggesting to me sexual fantasies in which we were involved. I saw her vividly in my mind's eye with my eyes closed. She appeared as a faint image in my vision when my eyes were open. I felt her control the extremities of my body. If my attention diverted from my body and its movements, it felt as if my arms and hands moved involuntarily.

She would instruct me to masturbate until I nearly achieved a climax. As soon as ejaculation felt imminent, I suspended gratifying myself and redirected my attention by taking up some other activity. After an hour or two, I resumed the therapy by restarting the process. I began to experience partial erections after following the routine for several days. Although the rehabilitation of my penis hadn't been completed, I was satisfied by simply having an erection, even if it took longer than it had in my youth. At this stage of the therapy, I stimulated myself for as long as necessary for my penis to become erect, after which I abandoned pacing myself and rigorously masturbated until I ejaculated without reservation. It had become clear that adopting the following measure improved my ED: Never ejaculate without first getting erect.

Erections are physiologically defined as involuntary. One cannot directly command his penis to grow erect. Nevertheless, a man can indirectly influence his penis by using techniques such as fantasizing about sex. Through daily exercises, I worked to fortify the gains that I had made. My erections took longer than they had in my younger years, but by remaining dedicated to my training, I recovered some of my vitality and got erections.

Chapter IV

At first, the intervention was thrilling. I spent hours in the basement conversing with erudite and sophisticated characters. They lauded my talents and sometimes promised of positive developments to my life. The bodiless characters informed me that I was going to be offered a faculty position at the University of London. I knew nothing about the school but found the prospect of living abroad exciting.

The days that I spent in the basement turned into weeks, but the prognostications of good fortune didn't come to pass. I lost confidence in the short-term fulfillment of the promises that had been made by the voices. Sitting in the basement chair that was positioned in front of one of its concrete walls, I said to myself, "Nothing outside of here is real." My statement established a boundary between hopes and beliefs that I formed while in the basement and what expectations it was safe for me to have outside the basement. I thought it imprudent to make decisions that relied upon the assurances proffered by disembodied voices, so I compartmentalized between fantasies in the basement and my affairs that took place outside of it.

After I had made the declaration, I heard in the background, "He's already developing coping skills." I knew that the voice belonged to Todd and that he was commenting upon what I had said. Despite receiving promises of immanent career success that would transform my life, I refrained from indulging in pursuits of pleasure too extravagant for someone of my means to afford. Eventually the voices with whom I conversed broached the subject of my use of drugs. It was concerning for those who were supervising the intervention. It was suggested to me that I consider bringing my drug use to an end. I never expressed any commitment to sustained sobriety or entering recovery.

I knew that the force affecting my life used hypnotherapy, and that Todd was the therapist performing it. His hypnosis conjured mental images, verbally expressed thoughts, and sensations that I recognized as emotions. At times, he entranced me into deep hypnoses during which I mindlessly followed instructions while unaware that I had the ability to break loose from what I was being hypnotized to do.

All this happened while I was experiencing mood elevation and euphoria. However, eventually I started to feel pauses to my feelings of elation, during which I was overtaken for brief periods with depression and anxiety, which were becoming increasingly noticeable. Voices and visions in my mind's eye suggested what was behind the downward mood swings. It was a third party with malicious intent who sent the transmissions causing the negative emotions. The culprit had gained control of a transmitter and used it to send signals to the transponder inside me that the instrument translated into audio and played it in my inner-ear cavities.

Shortly after I had formed an impression of what had gone haywire, Deidra's voice became noticeably absent. Her participation in the intervention seemed to have ceased. During a weeklong hiatus from the hypnotherapy, Deidra demonstrated self-discipline by not speaking a word as she listened to Todd deliver his hypnotherapy. After studying Todd for the seven days, she returned to make her mark upon the intervention, only now she had the ability to make use of some of the techniques she had learned from Todd. Although her voice remained inaudible much of the time, I suspected that she was behind the distressful episodes during which I was overtaken by negative emotions. I had to acknowledge that her skills had enhanced.

Bomb Shelter

The shelter was located on the estate belonging to the Lewis matriarch, the grandmother of Deidra, Sheila, Meaghan, and Brian. I asked why the bomb shelter couldn't be penetrated so that Deidra could be apprehended. In response to my question, I was led to understand that the shelter was fortified, and weeks of drilling had to take place before the chambers of the shelter were penetrated. Compounding the problem, the drill took considerable time to procure and transport, and all which had to be done inconspicuously so that journalists and authorities wouldn't be alerted to the situation. Once positioned, the drill had to cut through bedrock, making the work take even longer. The contractors predicted the drilling to take weeks. With no alternative, I patiently waited for the hole to be finished, so that Deidra could be smoked out.

Celina

I moved into a rental property a couple of weeks before the beginning of the fall semester at Wright State University Lake Campus. I rented the upstairs to a house that was a half mile from the school. The bottom story consisted of a large, unfurnished garage that the owner's son used to shelter his tools and truck. Apart from preparing for classes, smoking herbal incense was my only pastime. To support my chronic use of the novelty product, I resupplied myself by making trips to a head shop in Lima every two or three days.

On one occasion, after finding the head shop closed, with considerable disappointment, I made my way back to the house that I rented. As I drove on winding country roads, I heard in background, "You have to quit herbal incense Russell Cole..." I was overtaken by discontent and frustration. My reaction was to panic. I felt as if I were confined in a space too limited to afford mobility. I appealed to those participating in the intervention by pointing to the project's

recklessness and inhumaneness. My wellbeing, I insisted, was more important than the project's success.

I threatened to kill myself, which was a bluff intended to cajole those who oversaw the project into relinquishing their uncompromising position, so they'd negotiate. Not really intending to commit suicide, I kept my seatbelt fastened as I accelerated, all the while threatening the unthinkable. When my speed approached a hundred miles an hour the steering wheel jammed, and the car swerved to the left. A bump on the side of the road caused the car to go airborne. The vehicle's flight stopped after the car collided with a large pile of dirt that had been placed in front of an agricultural structure. After falling to the ground, the car rolled over.

I crawled out the window and got on my feet. The voices in my head were silent for the first time in weeks. I said, "Where are you, now, huh? Where are you, now?" Thoughts of a pipe with spice residue that I had placed in the console of the car entered my mind, leading me to open the compartment's lid to look for it. Some of the contents fell but I didn't see the pipe among them. Securing the rest of the contents with my left hand, I reached inside and continued searching for the incriminating utensil. I gave up after hearing police sirens closing in from the distance. I confronted the officer and offered as little information as I reasonably could as part of my explanation for the accident. One of the officers asked if I had taken bath salts. I laughed a bit and answered that I had not. They asked if I had a family member for them to contact. Without much thought, I provided my father's phone number. I overheard the conversation between an officer and my father. I suppressed anger as I listened to my father divulge that I took prescription Adderall. Fortunately, the officers didn't pursue the matter further. The investigation concluded that a panic attack had caused my erratic driving. Even though the lower ribs on my right side felt broken, I declined medical treatment from the paramedics. I needed to devote the

remainder of the day to renting a car, because I planned to attend orientation at Wright State University the next day.

Spaceship Odysseus

I was on my bed, staring at the ceiling, absorbed by fantasies. I was led through a history of something that preceded humanity. There was a spaceship, and I was a member of its community. On it, the inhabitants worked on various committees solving the community's problems. Anyone could serve on any committee, but all were expected to serve on at least one committee, so they contributed to the community. At night, after the inhabitants had finished their daily contributions, they congregated on a large disco floor where they performed mating dances that they had prepared in advance. The better choreographed and executed the dance, the greater the likelihood that the individual successfully attracted a sexual partner.

Most everybody appeared satisfied with the lifestyle that the community had established. The only discontent sprang from one person who came off a bit withdrawn and dissatisfied. Satan never succeeded during the nightly dances. Each evening, he departed from the disco alone. The reason for his failure to attract mates was attributed by members of the community to his lack of personal hygiene and a dance style that made him look self-conscious and inhibited.

Satan began to resent everybody on the spaceship. To vent his frustration, he sabotaged experiments that were being conducted by others. When community members discovered a vandalized experiment, many suspected that Satan was the culprit, but nothing was done because Satan steadfastly denied responsibility. Finally, after perpetrating serial acts of sabotage, Satan was caught red-handed. Satan was asked why he had behaved so destructively and given the opportunity to voice his complaints. After hearing him out, the community decided to give the poor

creature another chance. Reintegration into the community seemed have a positive effect on Satan. He was more enthusiastic, and his hygiene improved. With time, he was reaccepted as an uncompromised member of the community.

One day, Zeus was looking at some of the experimental contents aboard the ship. The inventory he performed revealed that something was missing. The genome of life was not among the cargo of the ship. The missing item was invaluable because it contained the blueprint for creating life on a habitable planet, on which organisms evolved to eventually include humanoids. The instructions had a divine origin, and for that reason needed to be recovered. Zeus without much thought identified Satan as the prime suspect. The executioner organized a committee, whose members searched for Satan. They reached the determination that the wilily suspect had already disembarked from the ship and now resided on earth. Twelve aboard the ship formed a group called the Druids. They vowed to reincarnate on earth so they could contribute to a mission intended to safeguard life on the planet.

Implantation

Convinced that the transponder wasn't in my tooth, I began believing that the device had been inserted into the tissue of my tongue by a dermatologist who had operated on me some months back to remove an ulcer. The procedure had left scar tissue that felt like an object, such as a microphone, embedded just underneath the skin on the tongue's surface. The presence of the abnormality provided evidence that the transponder was lodged in my tongue's tissue.

My new understanding of the device's location motivated me to return to Chicago for a second tongue operation. I hoped that the physician would remove the device if he were given the opportunity. The night before the appointment, I attempted to silence the voices in my head by disabling the transponder. I hoped that by inserting needles into the tissue of my tongue, there

was a chance that a component critical for its operation would be compromised. The old man saw the trauma that had been caused from the needle and concluded that the ulcer had returned. This time he insisted upon burning it off. As I heard flesh sizzling, I waited for silence. The voices never paused, and they continued to speak after the procedure was finished. The invasive speech resounding in my private realm of experience probably had nothing to do with anything done by the dermatologist. The burnt tissue on my tongue caused intolerable pain for weeks.

Behavioral Health Ward I

Sheila and Deidra boasted of an impending assault. The two girls had discovered that the mere persistence of voices in my head caused me pain. My lack of coping skills for managing the irritation led to erratic, sometimes destructive behaviors. I had recently replaced whitewall that I had damaged during a tantrum. Accumulating frustration over my powerlessness to affect what sounded in my head precipitated the disparate behavior. Collapsing in despair had caused me to crash through the hallway's whitewall. During another hypnotic assault, I fell to the ground and screamed, "Mommy!" and shook for moments after as I cradled myself on the living room floor. I'm not sure what the hypnosis had instructed me to entertain, but I knew that it had incited primitive fears.

At first, I fought back against the assault. I spent hours screaming at the voices, demanding that they relent bombarding my head with continuous noise, mostly in the form of taunts and insults. It was the relentlessness of the speech that mostly aggravated me, but the stupidity of what they said also created annoyance. The violation of the sanctity of a space that was inner to me and privately experienced, led to a feeling of violation.

"You have a behavioral disorder, Russell Cole...You have a behavioral disorder," Deidra repeated every few minutes. Deidra insisted that my failure to listen to the authority of a

nineteen-year-old woman who was speaking in my head was symptomatic of, “narcissistic personality disorder.” I argued that Son of Sam had made a mistake by obeying the voices that only he heard. Referring to the Field Museum, when she said, “Don’t turn around...don’t turn around,” as she walked alongside her companions, she insisted that my reaction to look behind me was anti-social behavior. I was unfamiliar with what a behavioral disorder was. However, since these were Deidra’s remarks, I was uninterested, because she was likely contriving a meaningless expression.

More bothersome to me was Sheila saying, “You must be off herbal incense, so we know what personality disorder you have.” I had already concluded following the hypnotherapy that Todd had performed that I was mentally ill. Therefore, I didn’t accept that it was possible for me to be diagnosed with a personality disorder. I knew little about personality disorders other than what I had gathered from reading a few articles by psychoanalysts whose research contributed to literature on NPD. I sometimes heard Sheila in the background, remarking in a wistful voice, “I’m a personality too.” What she meant eluded me. Was the aspiring politician claiming to be worthy of infamy? Was she proclaiming her humanity despite so obviously embodying the traits of NPD, herself?

Sheila sometimes insisted, “I’m your mirror reflection, Russell Cole.” I understood from what she said that she was mimicking me. I also concluded that I was intended to learn about myself from exchanging dialogue with a personality whose traits supposedly paralleled my own. I’d learn about myself and become more self-aware, which would prepare me to internalize an NPD diagnosis and, as a result, start behaving so that I modeled its symptoms. However, I was left uncertain of what our personalities had in common, because their parody of me missed the mark. For instance, I lived with my grandmother for a summer after I had finished college. This

was before I moved to Albany for graduate school. I spent the time doing warehouse work as a teamster in a Pepsi bottling plant in McKee's Rocks, Pittsburgh before I quit to take a slightly better paying data-entry job. Sheila, on the other hand, confined herself to her grandmother's mansion after blowing her inheritance on a primary campaign for mayor of Beverly Hills. My grandmother lived off half of my deceased grandfather's pension, which he had earned working for the civil core of engineers. Sheila's grandmother was left billions by her deceased spouse, a successful industrialist in Chicago. The biographies of the Lewis family members didn't cause me to reflect on myself because of significant differences to our life histories, so exposure to the Lewis' didn't affect my self-concept. At no point was I persuaded that I had NPD or that I should even consider the possibility.

Other times, I heard Sheila in the background saying, "Ahhhh...Be very, very quiet. I'm hunting a Russell." Such remarks convinced me that the intervention was little more than a drawn-out attempted murder. Although I never considered the possibility that I had NPD, I intuitively knew that I was the subject of an intervention designed to modify my personality so that I modeled NPD. I assumed that I was intended to serve as a case study and I might provide an ostensible definition of the well-researched personality disorder. The traits of my personality would be identified as symptoms of NPD, ending any uncertainty over the disorder's symptomology. Since NPD was associated with suicidal ideations, my self-inflicted death would further ensure a consensus that NPD was the correct diagnosis for me.

The hours that I spent yelling at the voices caused me to flex my abdomen. The activity eventually made me become so dehydrated that it caused my stomach muscles to cramp. To end the muscular contractions, I beat the bulging spasms with my closed fists. The fingers on my hands clinched, so I pried the fingers in one hand open with the knuckles of my other hand until I

could grasp a glass of water. I consumed as much of the liquid as I could stomach, stopping only because I could no longer balance myself. Cautiously making my way to my bed, I collapsed on the mattress and defecated myself as I fell asleep.

My parents, with whom I had communicated over the phone while in my deranged state, arrived from Chicago the next morning. Still overwrought and incoherent, my appearance as a madman led my dad and mom to physically immobilized me on the couch. We got in their vehicle after I had regained enough composure to walk to the car. They decided to take me to the hospital in Toledo.

In an examination room, I described to the physician the transponder that was responsible for what I heard. The doctor ordered an x-ray of my head. He looked at the results and told me that nothing unusual was present. The failure of the x-ray to reveal the source of my agony led me to panic. I started to scream as I hopped around the room using my fingers to try to rip into my tongue. My parents pleaded with me to stop. After a few moments, I composed myself and appealed to the physician to reexamine the x-ray, but he was hesitant to comply with my request. I explained that I had a PhD and told him that I'd accept that I was proven wrong if he looked more closely and still didn't see evidence of a transponder. I vowed not to continue to look for explanations for why the transponder wasn't present. Instead, I'd sign the consent forms required to admit myself into the behavioral health ward. The physician hastily looked again and assured me that anything metallic would have appeared in the X-rays. I sat on the cot for a few minutes waiting for a nurse who administered a shot of some benzodiazepine into my shoulder. I was then escorted to the ward.

The voices of Deidra and Sheila harassed me the entire night. "Raise your left arm...Bend your right knee. Rise and shine...it's a brand-new day in an institution." They were

intent upon preventing me from sleeping. What the young miscreants didn't know is that I used it as an opportunity to condition myself so that I could resist their control of me. I fought every impulse to lift my leg when instructed. I refused to stir out of bed when summoned. I tried to counteract impulses that felt unnatural, as if they hadn't originated from me. I didn't concern myself with intellectualizing my predicament. Rather, I approached the situation as an athlete. I took every opportunity to "Resistance train," by fighting urges that I thought to have come from outside me because I had no sensation of making them myself.

The following day I lied about my condition to the psychiatrist so that I could get discharged by telling him that after a night's sleep my normal thought patterns had returned. The psychiatrist, whom the nurses described as conscientious, placed me under considerable stress during the session. He asked question after question during the fifteen-minutes that I spent with him. It took effort for me to concentrate on what the psychiatrist was saying while ignoring the voices that harassed me.

He was reluctant to release me because my blood work indicated stress to my kidneys. However, he signed my discharge after I explained that I needed to retain my employment because of the health insurance that it provided. He prescribed the antipsychotic, Risperdal. I had taken it graduate school and hadn't found it effective. After I was discharged, I neglected to fill the prescription. I was convinced that no medication would improve my symptoms. My troubles stemmed from a transponder not from mental illness.

Discontent and Negligence

I was doing well at Wright State Lake Campus, except for a few minor blunders. I fell physically ill during the first month of classes which caused me to miss three days of work. Un-

fortunately, I had accrued only a single day of sick leave, so my salary was docked, and my absenteeism came to the attention of the dean. Despite the illness, none of my courses had signs of an out-of-control semester.

Preparing for the courses presented unusual difficulties. Members of the Lewis family tampered with my ability to read. When preparing syllabi, I confused course outlines. I incorrectly formed the impression that my criminology course was writing intensive. The syllabus that I constructed for it had writing assignments each week, burdening students with too much work. Further complicating the problem, I neglected to realize that my introductory course was marked as writing intensive. The syllabus that I distributed for it didn't quite meet the college's writing requirements.

The Lewis family had at their disposal hypnotic techniques that interfered with my classroom instruction. They had the ability to suppress ideas that I needed to complete the conceptualizations that I strung together when thinking of what to say next. I would begin stating an explanation until some concept failed to come to mind. It felt as if there was a blockage, an impediment preventing me from retrieving a familiar idea. I suspected that Deidra was mostly behind the blackened spots concealing ideas that I tried to recall. It was likely too much effort for the sluggish thing to continue the obstruction for longer than ten to fifteen seconds before she fatigued, which explained why the concept usually came to mind after I had stalled for several moments. If it took too long for me to retrieve, I detoured from the subject and returned to it after the concept came to mind.

In the third or fourth week, claiming to be overcome with concern, a nontraditional student in her sixties indignantly pointed out during class that the syllabus failed to mention that it was a writing intensive course. I was taken by surprise but assured her that I would consult with

the dean to safeguard against any problem that might result. She said that she had paid money and deserved better. She wasn't concerned with the lack of writing assignments. Rather, she feared that academic affairs might reject the course. I again told her that I would resolve the problem, but she continued to complain. I faced the risk of losing control of the class, so I tried to convince the woman that we needed to transition to other concerns. I persuaded her to be silent, but she had gotten under my skin, leading me to make an error in judgment. I issued a marginally snide remark that was directed at the woman. She hastily ascended to her feet and stomped out of the room. I had never encountered such a classroom display before and took offense. I followed her to the door and nearly slammed it behind her. Fortunately, I caught myself in the act and, instead, closed it softly.

Without delay, I brought the problem to the attention of the assistant dean. He told me that it was something that could be easily resolved. I could simply modify the syllabus so that the minimum of writing was met. I informed him that I intended to make the final an essay exam. The assistant dean appeared satisfied with my solution, so I thought that there was no longer a problem. When walking out the door, he said, "You're doing a good job," behind me.

During subsequent class, the woman made another scene. In the middle of the period, she brought up the matter again. As she was voicing her complaint, she looked behind her to the back of the classroom. Positioned as far away from me as possible sat a group of high school students who had been selected to participate in a program that required taking college courses. She began to chant something that struck me as rehearsed and looked behind herself for support. However, her fellow discontents neglected to participate, making her display look embarrassing odd rather than an act of resistance that inspired onlookers to revolt. She later communicated to me in an email that she was going to bring up the matter to both deans.

I entered the dean's office to go over my performance evaluation. The dean revealed that I had received only one out of four possible points. She said that I had provided no syllabus, I had distributed no assignments, I had offered no explanation of what materials were covered on tests, and I divorced my lecture from the textbook's contents. I tried relieving the dean of her misperceptions, but she showed no willingness to reconsider her position. She divulged that her source for making such conclusions were the high school students who were in the class. I explained that documents belonging to the course were uploaded to Blackboard, but she claimed to have no access to it. When I offered to log in, she was uninterested. It appeared as if she were staging a situation designed to provoke me. I almost walked out of the room but thought better of it and reversed in mid-steam. I sat back down and asked how I could improve. She assigned a mentor, who after inspecting the documents that I had drafted in preparation for my courses, conceded that I had adequately prepared. I became so disheartened by the performance evaluation that I neglected to apply for the permanent position.

Pain and Suffering Journal

This is entry recorded in a pain and suffering journal:

Today, 1/20/2013, at 10:00 Sheila and other characters in my head assaulted me with some hypnotic suggestion that caused me to scream out in pain and fear. I feel desperation. They tell me that this will be the semester from hell because I refused to get completely sober. I fear for my life. They will stop at nothing, I believe, because, in their minds, success is the only way to justify the crimes and abuses that they have committed against me.

At 1:02 AM, I attempted to sleep. The voices started to give me commands to smoke more herbal incense, also directing me to get up by instructing, "Rise and shine." When I smoke herbal incense, they send hypnotic commands causing me to feel the pain of canker sores and a

sore throat that made that made it difficult to swallow. They claim that they will stop torturing me if I quit smoking herbal incense. The voices say that they will be nice instead of cruel to me if I follow their imperatives. However, they failed to promise that Sheila will appear after the semester, and they sometimes suggest that I must go an indefinite amount of time sober with the voices in my head until Sheila comes. I needed to meet Sheila physically to confirm that my experiences were to ever end. However, I feared that if I submitted to one request that they would continue to make more. I'd be taking the first step toward becoming a slave, after which I would be commanded toward my self-destruction.

Regimen

By the time classes began at Lake Campus, I had settled into a regimen. Upon awakening, I experienced tranquility for a few moments before the onset of voices, which reminded me of the predicament in which I found myself. I reached for my prescription Adderall and swallowed two of the extended-release capsules, after which I went back to sleep for another fifteen or twenty minutes. After awakening the second time, I forced myself to my feet so I could make my way into the shower and vigorously scrub my body with soap and water. I was concerned with the impression that I made. I thought that demonstrating the highest-order hygiene would offset the stigma created by the multiple missing front teeth in my mouth that were clearly visible. It was part of a stigma-management strategy to counteract interpretations of me by coworkers as a drug addict. My smile was compromised, but not my hygienic habits. I even entertained the possibility that missing teeth might be an asset. Coming to work every day and exposing myself to college students in such a condition evidenced a resolve to work. It demonstrated a tenacity that I hoped others would interpret as a virtue.

I never ate at the small diner from where I ordered breakfast. I preferred to bring food home, so I could eat privately. It was important for me to be alone as much as possible. Behaving normally around others caused me considerable strain. I had to watch myself committing inadvertent behaviors that betrayed my dementedness.

Resistance

I was driving in the evening home from the head shop in Lima. The trip took me across confusing country roads that required me to navigate using GPS. In the background, I began hearing an onslaught of voices accosting me over my use of herbal incense. Meaghan, Sheila, Deidra and their parents participated in the confrontation. They demanded that I quit using synthetic marijuana and declined to negotiate.

In response to their coercive tactics, I raised my fist and shouted, “I would sooner die than submit to your demands!” I made it clear that I intended to continue using herbal incense as a matter of principle. Even if I thought it advantageous for me to abstain from smoking spice, I’d refuse to comply to their demands. I simply wasn’t going to have my life taken over by some bizarre assortment of disembodied personalities. I valued my autonomy more than my welfare.

The voices acted in concert when hypnotizing me. Some of the voices remained audible to distract me, while one or two of the voices delivered subliminal commands in the background. Inaudible commands during the first several months caused me to react forcibly. I cracked more than one of my teeth by involuntarily biting down. When driving, my right foot crossed my left and vice versa. I found myself accelerating violently without being aware of it. If I smoked herbal incense as I drove, I became lightheaded and impaired to the point that I had to fight to remain conscious.

Hypnoses impacted my mood. I often felt my emotions sink without reason. When this took place, I experienced a disturbed, depressed, and anxious mood that settled in my stomach. I assumed that my emotions were a response to a scenario that was suggested during hypnosis. I eventually concluded that I was being instructed to believe that there were no limitations to the intervention. It would last indefinitely or until my demise.

Siren

The thought of Sheila nauseated me, so when she commanded my attention masturbation was difficult. Meaghan's voice told Sheila to hand me over to her. Meaghan then tried to convince me that Todd was never a romantic interest of hers and that she had planned to be with me all along. Meaghan was intelligent and attractive. Sheila, on the other hand, had become ever more grotesque as her personality became more childlike. I assumed that her personality's maturity regression was a reaction to the frustration caused by my unwavering incomppliance.

Meaghan was only periodically a source of companionship. Most of the time we had together, we devoted to the treatment of my erectile dysfunction. On three occasions, she communicated the time and date when she planned to physically meet me. I spent the day that she was supposed to arrive cleaning my apartment by sweeping floors and disinfecting with a cleaning agent.

Every few moments, I heard a vehicle on the gravel driveway. I peered outside, but there was no car. I concluded that Deidra and Sheila were responsible for the sounds. The two girls must have had recordings prepared that they were now playing in front of their microphones on their transmitters during the buildup to Meaghan's arrival. Meaghan was not scheduled to meet me until seven in the evening, so I hadn't reason yet for disappointment. When seven approached, I put the cleaning supplies away and sat on the couch. Using a glass bong that I had

purchased from the head shop in Lima, I took in pull after pull of herbal incense as I watched the clock. At seven, I walked down the steps to my front door and opened it. There wasn't any sign of the woman. Somewhat in shock, my stomach sank. Instead of experiencing elation over the end of my isolation and uncertainty, I found myself in a precarious situation. I had to entertain the prospect that no validation or support awaited. I might face Sheila and other Lewis family members alone indefinitely.

Suffering in this state made life not worth living. Fortunately, there were a few factors counteracting suicidal impulses. There was the possibility that time was on my side. I could plow ahead until the enterprise halted due to resource limitations. Furthermore, even if never freed, I was resolved not to allow for the finalization of a Lewis victory. The longer I survived the greater the family's expenses and frustrations.

To avoid emotional upheaval, I dosed myself with Seroquel. I had learned from my encounters with Sheila and Deidra that the worse response to psychic distress was panic. I had to resign myself to outlive the situation by not fixating on my sort-term circumstances and my inability to change them. Instead, I fell asleep knowing that in the morning I'd endure another day. I didn't let myself believe that there'd be a resolution any time soon.

Breakthrough

I broke teeth from inadvertently biting down. I stabbed myself with knives and forks when washing dishes. Never experiencing silence, I heard commands, insults, and threats every moment of the day. For weeks, I felt pain from incessant speech in my head and the effects of malevolent hypnosis.

On my couch writhing in anguish, I heard comforting speech. All that was said was, “My dear boy.” I intuitively knew that it was the voice of Jürgen Habermas. He was aware of my situation, so he offered a few words that provided some solace. I was sitting on the coach polishing my shoes after teaching classes when the voice of another personality broke through. John McCain commented that I was obsessive/compulsive enough to have a career in the military.

I had communications with three women who claimed to be reporters from the Times of London. Their voices were largely unintelligible because of their faintness. I only understood a few of their words. With them in the back of my mind, I conceived of appropriate names for them. For whatever reason, they wanted to be named after pagan virtues. With a few moments of thought, I came up with the following: Passion, Transgression, and Devotion.

Therapeutic Exercise

I walked frequently to distract myself from the hypnotic assaults that were perpetrated by my omnipresent, disembodied assailants. During these marches, I heard celebrities in the background. The voice of Queen Latifa was present, describing recurring dreams to Dr. Dre and Snoop Dog. Her dreams followed a white man disparately addicted to crack who was alone in the ghetto. She and the other rappers questioned how I had survived.

Pain and Suffering Journal

I desired to record the full extent of my torment for purposes of prosecution and civil litigation. The following passages were written in Celina, Ohio:

Today, the voices tormented me in my office until I broke down crying and shaking in terror. They kept insisting that I needed to be sober for myself, so that I am ready to meet them physically. One character, Meagan, indicated that, “Nobody wanted to physically touch me if I was smoking herbal incense.” They say that they will persist in tormenting me until I concede

that there is no choice but sobriety. They claim that it will be a blissful semester for me if I do what they want. After learning to follow their commands, I would meet my wife, Meaghan Lewis, whom they also referred to as Penelope. I had to leave my office hours because I feared that I would be heard if I cried out. The methods they have implemented involved such cruelty that I suspect that I might be the subject of snuff pornography. For all that I knew, the Russian Mafia had paid my dentist to implant the device in me, so I could be used to satisfy bloodlust.

Clairvoyance

As I was walking in a retail store in Celina, I had experiences that defied conventional explanations. As I moved through the indoor space, I had premonitions of what I was about to see before encountering it. After making my way to a new position, my head unmindfully turned to the left or right and my vision focused on merchandise that corresponded to a mental image that I had in advance. Trying to make sense out of this unusual phenomenon, I juggled two possible explanations. The first explanation for the dumbfounding experience, the one that I favored at the time, was that I was under mind control and had been hypnotized to have mental images come to mind that preceded the visual perception of merchandise that I was directed to see after being guided to a position on the retailer's floor.

The alternative explanation, which I found more convincing as my psychosis waned in its later stages, looked to my sub-consciousness as the source of the peculiarity. Its mechanisms had processed sensory data so that I was consciously led to believe that I was clairvoyant. Although neither of these explanations are, at all, satisfying, in the later stages of my psychosis, I was inclined to adopt the latter account. This explanation is more conventional than the initial account. Also of interest, the later explanation departed from my early reliance upon objects that existed independently from me as the causes for mystifying encounters. This indicates that my thought-

patterns were returning to a state resembling what they had been during the prodromal period. Once again, I was interpreting mystifying phenomena as products of my own psyche. I ceased believing that they were manufactured by something other than myself. A willingness to adopt this more mainstream mode of explanation was indicative of a return to the condition that I was in before stumbling over the trip wire.

Valley of Death

Eventually the voices in my head reached the consensus that they were making no progress, and it was time to implement another strategy. Todd and Meaghan at this point had given up hope of altering the objectives of the intervention. The parents, Stephan and Margery, and their daughter, Sheila, desired my sobriety or death. They never detoured from plans to accomplish one or the other. I heard Mrs. Lewis mention that it was time for, “Deidra to get a crack at me.” The girl remained out of reach in a family-owned bomb shelter.

I referred to this phase of the intervention as the “Valley of Death.” Todd and Meaghan, who had been offering me comfort, dropped out completely. Before departing from my head, they stated that I had to face Deidra alone. I needed to immune myself to the effects of hypnosis, and how better to do it than through exposure to the invocations made by the stupidest member of the project. I would become conscious of the hypnotic commands that were being given to me and learn to resist them.

Deidra’s onslaught was all but continuous. For hours, I heard, “You have a behavioral disorder Russell Cole...You have a behavioral disorder...” I reasoned and pleaded with the young lady, but to no avail. I was nothing more to her than an object of manipulation. “You need to quit herbal incense, Russell Cole...You need to quit herbal incense...” chanted Deidra. She

was ebullient. Claiming to have found purpose in life, she occasionally screamed, “I finally feel alive!”

From what I concluded, Deidra was working to achieve the project’s first benchmark, my sobriety. I had to be free of drug use if my suicide was to be interpreted as undeniably symptomatic of NPD. This would allow for the NPD diagnosis to be uncontroversially applied by analysis included in my case study.

She was a psychopath who was void of empathy or sympathy, so I couldn’t persuade her. Instead, I developed a strategy of total resistance. I strived always to be disobedient to her commands. In some instances, my interests were aligned with her instructions, so I was left with the option of compliance or the arbitrary adoption of another task. I escaped the binary by devising a third course of action. The activity I adopted was intended to contribute to a larger project, whose steps for completion included the task that she had instructed me to perform.

Deidra kept mocking me, telling me to kill myself. Under the pressures of Deidra’s assault, I sometimes envisioned committing suicide. I contemplated taking a bottle of Xanax to the Allegheny Mountains, where I would swallow all the medication and fall asleep without clothes, exposing myself to the elements. Again, thoughts of how I might affect my mother deterred me. I was unconcerned about my father since I knew that he would preoccupy himself after my death with the care of my mother. My mother, however, might suffer profound depression from the loss of her first son.

My Enemies

In my apartment in Celina, I performed rituals designed to galvanize my spirits and fortify my courage. Sometimes I marched about my apartment as if I were encircling my enemy. I taunted the adversary with an imagined sword, packing in the Lewis family members evermore

tightly. As I marched from my living room to my bedroom, around the bed, and back into the living room, I looked outside through the glass balcony door at an approaching thunderstorm. As I walked around in a circle throughout the living room, I saw lightning strike within ten yards of me just beyond the balcony that spanned out from the glass door. I experienced what happened next in a state of dissociation. My mind divorced from my body. I observed my body as it moved without me controlling it. I heard a tremendous roar of thunder as I saw the flash of light. As it happened, I raised my right fist and shouted something unrehearsed or imagined. What sounds my mouth made had a flow of pitches that struck me as consistent with a language. As the words came out of my mouth, my body collapsed to the floor. Because my actions synchronized with the lightening, I assumed that I had been touched by something divine. Zeus first came to mind. Although ignorant of the language in which I had spoken, the meaning of the words, which were suggested by the divine intelligence that reached out to me, became known to me. What I had spoken translated into, "I shall vanquish my enemies!"

Deadly Persistence

Deidra had crossed some lines making others in the Lewis family apprehensive, and they knew that her supplies were dwindling and that she'd soon run out of water. The Lewis family decided to obstruct her exit from the bomb shelter and simply allow her to expire. Knowledge of what was taking place could destroy the Lewis dynasty. Therefore, Deidra's passing was the most expedient solution to the family problem. They justified their decision by rationalizing that she deserved to die for her failures.

Near the end of the second semester, Todd and Meaghan rejoined the collection of voices. Todd estimated that Deidra only had ten days to live. Although I knew that I was gambling by setting my hopes upon the ten-day expiration of Deidra, I decided to participate in

the visual. At night, I sat on my couch and mocked the young woman as she contrived disparate appeal after disparate appeal, assuring her family that she was sorry. Deidra, at one point, claimed that fumes from a fire that was lit by her family in the shelter's ventilation were irritating her throat. To guard against the smoke, Deidra tied a bandana around her mouth that she had found in one of the shelter's rooms, so I began calling her Butch Cassidy. Although at my age I had long abandoned making fun of people, especially women for their appearances, I made an exception in the case of Deidra. I would have done anything humanly possible to inflict harm upon the young woman no matter the tastelessness of the method.

Meaghan told her if she took off the device and stomped on it, then she'd be released from the shelter. Deidra was so preoccupied with torturing me, however, that she didn't take off the device, let alone disable it. I suspected that she didn't trust Meaghan and believed that her only chance for survival was to achieve the first of the benchmarks belonging to her family's project. At one point, Deidra begged Meaghan for a glass of water. She told Meaghan that she could simply place it outside of the bomb shelter's door. I interpreted her nonsensical plea as symptomatic of a cognitive breakdown. Her condition was clearly worsening. I continued to listen for changes to the young woman's condition. After the eighth day, her speech slowed. It sounded raspy and deep. By day ten, she ceased to speak altogether. From that point on, I have never heard her speak again.

Chapter V

Communing with the gods

Sitting in the basement, staring at the concrete wall in front of me, I contemplated my prospects. I no longer had a job, only unstructured time. My instructorship at Wright State Lake Campus had provided me with distraction for the past several months. It took my mind off the

torment that I endured nearly all hours of the day. Without the labor from an occupation absorbing my attention, I feared that my disembodied pursuers would dominate my thoughts and actions even more.

With no premonition of what was about to take place, I inhaled herbal incense. Acting without forethought, I was compelled to rise to my feet. Just the same as when my pelvis had gyrated while driving in Chicago and when I had exclaimed contempt for my enemies when lightning struck in my Celina backyard, a force took possession of me. I marched along a figure eight on the concrete floor of my parent's basement, shouting, "I am Odysseus...I am Odysseus...I roll Western because I am Loneliness...I roll western because I go back looking for others..."

Following the revelation that I was Odysseus in a former life, I felt infused with new vitality, energy in my body that I had not had for years. I was euphoric without ingesting drugs, and my mind swelled with ideas. The remembrance of past lives activated virtues that I had mastered in during those lifespans. These potentials had been dormant in my personality until the rapture. Now I had competencies that I had acquired over multiple lifetimes. Recovery of these virtues made me more mature and patient. Moments after I chanted about a former life as Odysseus, I began communing with the divine.

During my first encounter in the spiritual realm, I communicated with a kind experimenter, who claimed a divine status as mankind's creator. I had revelations during trances that followed the ingestion of synthetic marijuana. Each trance revealed insights into the world and my peculiar role in it. The visions that I had and the verses that I involuntarily spoke combined into an explanation for man's presence in the universe that was parsimonious, eloquent, and compelling. I was transformed from an atheist into Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith.

I believed in something that was paradoxical. I knew that no one would give credence to what I said if I told them what had been revealed to me, but someday all the world would be convinced of it all the same.

The crime being committed against me had provoked divine condemnation. The gods decided that I had enough suffering. They interdicted and released me from the effects of the transponder by taking over the frequencies that were being used to cause me harm. I had been the victim of a psychological gang rape for over a year. There was something polluting my body that incited intense sensations; an object over which I had no ability to extract or to control. The criminals who had devised the inescapable intervention into my life had intentions that weren't benign or benevolent. They were motivated only out of malice.

Keeping a journal was not a concern or even a consideration, because the contents of what was revealed to me would be disseminated to others through a communicative process that used telepathy. I was sometimes introduced to explanations for what had happened during my life. I was fed one interpretation of what stood behind the events that I had observed followed by a contradictory interpretation of what had taken place, both going beyond what I could have possibly known from what I had seen. It was an attempt to fill in a backstage that stood behind what I had experienced. On this backstage my mind played out different scenarios that might have been the reason I saw what I did. Each pair of contrary interpretations formed an opposition. To resolve the contradiction created by the opposing accounts, I had to synthesize them into what I called a midpoint. I believed that the reconciliation of opposing interpretations formed conceptualizations that were better suited to model reality. By undergoing this dialectic, I became cognizant of more integrated and nuanced representations of the world.

On occasion, forces pulled me to my feet and compelled me to march for hours as I summarized what I had learned. I was engaged in a process of intellectual expansion and consolidation. Periods of expansion exposed me to new insights. I later integrated the revelations into a unified system of truth-statements during periods of consolidation. The integration was analogous to piecing together a puzzle. I yelled “snapshot” or “click-snap” when a truth-statement seemed to fit into place.

We are the Gods.

I inhaled the smoke and immediately felt immense euphoria, a sensation that far exceeded anything that I’d anticipate from the use of cannabis. After pulling in several puffs, my eyes rolled back, and my head fell backwards as I entered an alternate consciousness. I experienced dissociation from my body, leaving me aware of my movements and my speech but not feeling as though they were under my control. With my head leaning back, I stared at the ceiling as I heard words that I involuntarily enunciated. I listened to myself recite unrehearsed verses that struck me as so compelling that I recognized them as Truth. I intuitively knew that what I spoke was divine revelation.

The following passage is assembled from fading memory. Although not verbatim, I believe that it relays the meaning of the words that I spoke:

Lightning struck earth leaving two electromagnetic residencies. Both were emotions.

Apollo was yellow. Yellow was transparency. Hermes was brown. Brown was empathy.

Apollo entered Hermes and pushed out Odysseus. Odysseus was violet. Violet was loneliness. Together they were the Trinity. Apollo was sunlight. Hermes was earth. Odysseus was life.

Next came Athena, who was made to keep Odysseus company. Athena and Odysseus couldn't exist as lovers, so Hermes and Apollo created Diana. Diana fell in love with Athena. Jehovah was created next. He was meant to be alone. Then came Satan, who fathered Penelope so that Odysseus had someone to marry. Aphrodite was created later. Never was she to marry. Apollo transformed into life after first existing as an emotion. Life was present after Apollo merged with Hermes. Apollo provided the transparency necessary for lucidity and Hermes offered the yearning for understanding others. Together, they formed loneliness, the drive that causes us to desire others.

Analysis: System Maturity

After the system amasses enough propositions, it transforms into a new state that is qualitatively distinct from its original morphology. In its new condition, propositions become entangled in inter-supporting relationships. Such connections proliferate until propositions can no longer be individuated, and, instead, exist only in a psychotic web-of-belief. In this condition, extracting propositions so they can be evaluated *sui generis* is not feasible, and if a proposition were to be taken as standalone, its meaning would still be altered because of the loss of its inter-relations with other propositions and the absence of the inter-textual relationships that affect the definitions of concepts.

Analysis: Passage into a Web-of-belief.

In this state, change to psychosis involves the occasional large-scale reinterpretation of experiences during psychosis. Changes to the psychosis cannot be observed as changes to individual propositions. Change, rather, has large-scale consequences for the belief system, because

it oftentimes affects propositions that are core to it, requiring all their dependencies to be reinterpreted so they conform to newly established parameters created by the modification of propositions assuming more fundamental positions in the belief system.

Analysis: Phases

As the psychosis progressed and the characters in the plot transformed, only Illuminati Vampires who sucked the positive emotions out of human prey, were condemned to hell. Vampires would become deep sea organisms that overpopulated the ocean floor to the extent that there'd be no room for them to move. The proliferation of what are called, "Tunises," would result from a hurricane hitting the Lowlands of the Netherlands. The flooding of Holland would then trigger a chain of natural disasters that eventually annihilated illuminati.

As my psychosis continued, I began softening the dichotomizations that I made between others and myself. My alienation from humanity became less pronounced. Hell became a space only reserved for members of national intelligence communities. Illuminati, who filled these ranks, operated outside the boundaries that regulated other actors who interacted in society. They were responsible for conducting experiments on members of their respective populations with little concern for the harm that they inflicted upon their subjects. They, in fact, devastated the lives of research subjects with the goal of refining their methods further with each new experiment.

With the assistance of the gods, I planned to create hell for illuminati by convincing every one of its members while they continued to live that hell awaited them after death. Without the presence of others of their kind, who remained unconvinced that hell laid ahead following their death, they couldn't validate their instinct to remain confident, so they could continue to

look forward to reincarnating above ground. Without the validation offered by others, they'd lose confidence and become vulnerable to suggestions that hell awaited them.

Another topos concerned challenges that I faced when assembling those who comprised my marriage. The house of Odysseus was the keystone of the Druid Pantheon. My marriage would act as a kernel for a system of social relationships that was programmed to execute a new human genome. This upgraded genetic coding meant that every personality raptured during each lifetime, so individuals had at their disposal the learning that they had accomplished over multiple lives.

Druids

Resisting Saturn's authority, a band of humanoids separated from the rest of humanity and began to live on their own. They became a tribe that named itself the Druids. The twelve of them all had lucky colors and lucky numbers. My name was Odysseus. My lucky color was violet, and my lucky number was seven.

The color violet elevated my mood. If I saw something that was violate, I pointed at the color and then touched my gut with my hands as I said, "Violate!" I used the technique to comfort myself when I was insecure and unconfident. If I performed the operation seven times consecutively, my mood substantially improved.

The small cell of resisters retained knowledge of reincarnation. In between lifetimes, while in a state referred to as reincarnation suspension, Druids weren't interested in dreaming of their past life. Instead, they looked down at the living and predicted the outcomes of ongoing social processes that promised to shape the social conditions in which the Druids reincarnated.

Druids used their time while suspended between lives to make plans to rid the world of Saturn's offspring. Saturn's children had evolved into a tribe named illuminati. They planned to create heaven on earth for themselves by picking off those whom they found putrid.

As my psychosis played out, I felt as if I were intuitively guided by a plan. I had a sensation in the back of my head that I interpreted as the plan's contents being extracted.

The Contest of Life

Life is a competitive sport. During the expansion of life, lifeforms branch out and proliferate. They continue to expand until they become so overgrown that they are no longer sustainable. At this point, life contracts. Lifeforms compete to find their way back to the middle. The lifeform that positions itself best will decide what grows back.

Aristotelianism synthesized with Naturalism.

The universe is pluralistic. Nature exists as objects that belong to classes that are defined by their essential properties. To determine the quintessential properties of a class, one must conduct a type of naturalism. When a unique object is found, it is used as a primary exemplar. It serves as an ostensible definition, a standard for determining if other objects should be included under the extension of the concept. The essential properties of the class are discovered through the empirical observations conducted as part of a naturalist methodology. From observing nature, we infer what essential properties define a class.

Nature and Kinds

Humanity currently exists as an incomplete natural kind, or as "a species." A species of animals becomes a natural kind if it has the potential for infinite reproduction despite the

ongoing attrition of its members. Humans have yet to master sustainability. Therefore, humanity is not technically a self-sustaining form of life.

As members of a species, humans are meant to provide a natural function. They are managers of ecosystems, because they have the capacity to reap the surplus that they produced.

Humanity is destined to be more than a natural kind. Humans will become a kind. This life level involves not existing within nature, but outside of it. As soon as humanity occupies more than one planet, it will become a kind, no longer dependent upon nature as a part of an ecosystem.

Revelations

After being led through handwriting exercises, I wrote with a pen on paper as a means of communicating with gods. I felt my hand being guided as I handwrote words. The writings were organized into verse. I wrote:

The gods are among us.

They inhabit the same spaces,

Only they cannot be seen because they exist upon a higher scale,

So, we are perceptible to the gods, but the gods are imperceptible to us.

The gods are sometimes vigilant of our affairs.

They can intercede telepathically.

Just as they interdicted in the life of Odysseus, in the life of Jesus, the life of Mohammad, and lives of profits, they have communicated with me.

New Ages

The gods attempt to conduct a millennium about every thousand years. Each millennium requires concentration and effort by the gods to produce the telepathy chain, which is why these events are rare. Humanity is left to its own devices the rest of the time.

Odysseus led the millennium in the Bronze Age. Approximately a thousand years later, Jesus orchestrated such an event in the Iron Age. Mohammad came after Jesus several centuries later. A new age is brought about from the construction of scripture. Someone must live a remarkable life that translates into a compelling story for scripture to be created. The biographical narrative expresses certain values and approaches to life whose adoption enhances civilization. Millenniums incrementally improve the human condition.

I was seated so that the water-stained wall was in front of me. My head was pulled upward. Out of my mouth came, "Hello, Russell...this is Tunis." She began her sentences with, "Tunis says..." She was comforting and gentle, but she reserved hate for the contemptuous.

Tunis says all livestock must be released. Livestock will not be able to live independently at first, but with human aid the survival instincts of livestock will be restored. People can continue eating meat. However, the animal must be killed as game. Predatory threat makes a species more beautiful. It is not cruel to kill animals because they are reincarnated, but it is the worse crime imaginable to rob them of all their lives by making them livestock.

Gods populate the world. They have distinct personalities from one another and form their own judgements. They live mostly in accord and recognize an informal leader: the first

God, who is the patron of Christianity. He is married to a wife named Tunis, who patrons livestock but loves all animals.

Distinct families of gods inhabit the different regions of the earth. I communicated with the gods of the West, the Middle eastern gods, and the West and East African gods. I noticed that the gods have different values and temperaments depending on their geographical location.

Humanity affects the gods just as the gods affect humanity. We are the subjects of an ongoing experiment, and we are occasionally tinkered with by the gods so that they can see the effects. After assessing our behaviors, the gods use the insights that they gain to model their own lifestyles and interpersonal relationships.

Radiation doesn't affect the bodies of gods, due to the scale of frequencies out of which they are strung together, so they live as permanents. The gods have children who mature until their personalities reach their peak potential. After that, their aging slows to a near stop.

Time Space

The future is contingent, but its outcomes can be prognosticated depending upon the observer's perspective. Scales of frequencies form a pyramidal hierarchy. Time is experienced as condensed when on top of the pyramid. An event when viewed on a lower scale is perceived as taking longer to happen than it does when viewed from a higher scale. This allows for beings on higher scales to see what is projected to occur on a lower level before it has reached its completion. The different perspectives create a distinction between destiny and fate. The gods see destiny. Humans experience fate.

There is another way of understanding it. Time cascades down from the top level of the hierarchy to the bottom where it flattens out, after which events can no longer be altered. The gods perceive events prior to the flattening of time. When trying to alter the course of events,

they can work ahead of the time experienced by humans. After time flattens and flows out of the pyramidal structure, it is recycled so that it flows back down from the top.

The gods are sometimes fascinated with the technologies developed by humans. The gods commented that human technologies are concerned with manipulating minutia that only exists on our lower scale of frequencies, where matter is strung together with imperfections, leaving noise. They cannot reproduce human technologies themselves because the same matter does not exist on their scale. Due to there being less noise in their environment, the gods have less complications to resolve when devising technological solutions. The technology of the gods appears more minimalistic and elegant for that reason.

The outcome of the experiment was unforeseen, but certain mechanisms were emplaced granting all humans some assurances. There is reincarnation. Because of memory, each life is preparation for the next. If one lives a great life, then he will be endowed with good instincts in subsequent lives. The experiment also serves as entertainment for the gods. When they are not preoccupied with other affairs, they watch the stories formed by our lives. The gods refer to us as half-lives. They used the term because our bodies and the quale that flow within them appear translucent. Because human emotions are not solid colors, the gods once believed that we didn't experience pain and didn't suffer the same way they did. Rather, gods believed that life for humans was dreamlike.

I questioned the gods about the pain that they had created by their experiment. The first god, the kind experimenter, wept as he tried to explain why he had been ignorant of our pain. I found his explanation an inadequate excuse. I wanted never to be with the gods. Instead, I wanted to be reincarnated in some other world. I raised my fist and shouted at the water-stained wall, "Send me along the intergalactic flow of souls!"

Telepathy

Gods speak to mortals using the conduit of telepathy. Telepathy is a mechanism that allows the sender to push out messages that are vocalized by the recipient. The transfer is facilitated by libidos. Libidos are energy flows that connect all life on the planet, including gods and humans. Beings who reside on lower scales provide glow, a type of energy, which is enjoyed by beings who occupy higher dimensions. The mechanism of telepathy is related to the reincarnation system. For a human to use telepathy, a person must know of reincarnation so that he can appreciate the complexity of other personalities. Without an extensive understanding of other personalities, it is impossible to recognize the words conceived by another personality in one's own speech.

The realization of reincarnation occurs after rapturing. The event is defined as the moment when a personality remembers past lives. The depositing of "breadcrumbs" during a life enables a person to rapture. Breadcrumbs consist of incidents belonging to someone's biography that are recorded in history or recanted in oral tradition. Breadcrumbs incite a mnemonic process that leads to the recognition of a life already lived. The role of breadcrumbs in rapturing creates an incentive for a person to make choices that contribute to memorable biography.

Hummingbirds

My parents detected changes to my behaviors. I was becoming more eccentric and more withdrawn. I was less inclined to spend time with them, preferring the solitude of the basement. I had disavowed myself of cable news. Current affairs or anything involving politics disinterested me. I had stopped focusing on societal events that now seemed too distant and unalterable to jus-

tify concern. In the sacred space found in the basement of my parents' house, I spent time directly impacting something more immediate and real, the development of the Millennium. It was a project that gave new purpose to my life.

My mother tried to engage me by insisting that I do mundane activities, such as playing scrabble. I hated the game, so I compromised with her by instead going on walks with her in a nearby nature preserve. When there, I saw unusual occurrences. While walking the path that cut through tall grass and wildflowers, I saw four hummingbirds flying side by side to my right. I took it as a sign of a deified world.

Deification

Other characters dropped into place. After meeting the Pegases, I was introduced to Zeus. I had met the old man, who lived in my parents' neighborhood, after moving back to the Chicago suburb to live with my parents. I was asking for signatures for a Green Party candidate. As soon as the grizzly old man knew of my intentions, he ordered me off his property. Walking out, I glanced at the Constitution Party sign that was posted in his yard.

Zeus specialized in the telepathic manipulation of airplanes, birds, and other flying objects. He claimed that he could affect the weather with telepathy by starting events that had meteorological consequences, such as causing Russian planes to drop dry ice on clouds. Zeus, as a hobby, used telepathy to vicariously follow surfers who tried to ride waves during hurricanes. Zeus told of surfers who had fallen victim to the force of crashing waves, causing them to tumble under the white water. The undercurrent rapidly pulled the surfers miles into the ocean and eventually down to the ocean floor. The process took place so rapidly that the surfers didn't die prior to reaching the ocean depths.

The grizzly old man mocked the “Idiots” who tried such stunts, by saying, “Way cool...Awesome...Oh no!” Apparently, bodies, due to the deep sea’s tremendous water pressure, entered a state of suspended animation. The surfers found themselves in absolute darkness and unable to move. They had only the faint hope of rescue to occupy their thoughts. Those who thought they could override the strength of nature became Tunises, deep sea organisms that are named after their patron goddess, Tunis.

Diana dropped into place following Zeus. She was an old schoolmate of mine from Upper St. Clair. Her mantra was, “Always alone...” She liked dogs and happened to own a sheep dog that was the reincarnation of my childhood dog, who was a toy poodle. I was introduced to Aphrodite while positioned in the chair facing the concrete wall. I heard, “Aphrodite...Aphrodite...” I saw a vision of her looking up with a confused expression. She had also attended high school with me.

I learned that I had been selected to graduate. My time in this frequency scale on earth had been long enough. I had earned the opportunity to live with the gods. I also had the privilege of taking a limited number of people with me. I chose my tribe, whose members would ascend along with me to a more refined scale of frequencies; one without the noise; what amounts to radiation. We would live as permanents alongside our divine creators. I remember that I found it interesting that I had only been acquaintances with the members of the druid tribe rather than close friends. They weren’t the individuals with whom I had socialized on a regular basis in high school.

Ascending the Steps

The gods had created a telepathy chain that placed Jehovah next to me so that we could communicate without mediation. We had both been selected to live in another dimension of

reality that is constructed out frequencies that are part of a higher scale, one in which our bodies wouldn't be bombarded with radiation. We had the opportunity to exist as permanents along with the nameless gods who inhabited the earth. I was convinced that I would simply walk up a slope. The path promised to lead me to a new world. However, before entering the liminal state between the spiritual and the profane, I needed to practice my steps. A mishap could cause me to stumble off the slope resulting in catastrophe. I'd be stuck in an in betwixt state in the reincarnation system, so I needed to walk cautiously as if I were traversing a tightrope.

The reincarnation system was both mechanical and natural. When existing in our scale of frequencies, we can only see nature from inside it. When freed from our corpuses, the electromagnetic residencies forming our personalities become transferable to all scales. Following death, our personalities are picked up by a mechanical apparatus, whose matter belongs to a higher frequency scale. The mechanical system places our personalities on suspensions, where we gaze down at living humans who exist in a lower frequency scale. There, we sing to others who are also suspended. The voices of suspended personalities contribute to chants that are directed upon other suspended personalities or upon living humans below. Chants affect the emotional states of those upon whom they are directed. Personalities who lived badly in their former lives are subjected to taunts that are sung by others. Rather than experiencing an uplifting feeling from taking part in enthusiastic group chants, chastised personalities feel depressed and prefer sleeping and dreaming.

The magnetic pull caused me to pace around in my parent's house late into the night in preparation for my journey. I practiced until every muscle in my body felt as if it were about to contract. At times, I perceived translucent strings connected to each other in empty spaces; signs,

I thought, of an emerging ascendancy, reminding me of taking LSD in my youth. Despite my perseverance, I never broke with reality.

At one point, Jehovah and I deliberated over who should ascend first. I deferred to him and insisted that he go first. He didn't hesitate. I remember crying over the thought of being left behind. I discovered that the practice I performed for ascending the steps ultimately served as a learning exercise. It was later revealed that bodies can't be adjusted to exist on another frequency scale. Another option for living with the gods was the implantation of my personality into a prosthetic body. The gods warned that this too was not a desirable solution. My ability to have sex wouldn't just be compromised, I'd be totally sexually dysfunctional, forcing me to assume a reduced status in the community that restricted the kinds of work I could do. Eventually, feeling stifled, I'd grow weary of my inferior social position and even resentful. There is no practical way to physically commune with the gods. Telepathy is the only way humans can meet with the divine personalities.

Phenomenology in Motion

When in the basement of my parents' house, I walked in figure eights and said, "This is phenomenology in motion..." I was training my perception to hone objects differently. Honing involved reaching out to intuitively grasp and string together the frequencies out which the perception constitutes objects. To retune my perception, it was necessary to conduct exercises that strained parts of the body, such as eye muscles. The exercises and their intended purpose smacked of new-age yoga.

I augmented eye exercises with bodywork. I held my arms above my head and waved them quickly back and forth. This activity was derived from the motions performed by ancient

Druid priests who tried to crack the skies by eliciting divine intervention in support of their warring tribe. I performed the arm motions for a few minutes several times a day.

Sacrifice

Without forethought, I grabbed a heavy metal object off the table and quickly marched up the stairs and into the living room where my mother was asleep in a leather chair with one of the small poodles. I got a foot behind her and raised the object as if I were going to violently dispatch her. Before I swung the object, my body drew back, and I turned around and proceeded downstairs. I learned from the gods that I had passed the Abrahamic test. I was willing to sacrifice something dear to me to follow divine authority, but in the end, I was pulled back by a telepathic harness that had been placed on me by the gods who had used Jehovah as a driver. It was a means of directing where and how I moved. He said to me right before envisioning me on the verge of striking my mother, “Don’t do it, kid.”

By not killing my mother, I had foiled an Illuminati plot that intended for me to commit murder. After I had returned to the basement, I intercepted telepathic messages that were sent by the University of Albany counselor, who was known in illuminati circles by the alias, The Bagger. She communicated with my Frankfort dentist, Candy, and to other illuminati. They conversed that night for hours as they both waited for evidence of their plot’s success.

“Bagger to Candy, any blue lights yet?”

“Candy to Bagger, no blue lights yet in Frankfort.”

The bagger had assured other members of illuminati that my ruination was imminent. The promise of the event motivated Illuminati to enter formation behind the Bagger. The group used their voices to strengthen the chant that was directed onto the back of my head. Her chant inducted a deep hypnosis, under which I was instructed to commit matricide. My failure to

comply with the command caused Illuminati to become unenthusiastic and disperse from behind me. I felt relief from Illuminati attacks. Breaks in the illuminati formation gave an opportunity for other personalities to assume positions behind me in the telepathy chain. I noticed some encouragements whispered behind my head that uplifted my emotions. I found a permanent marker and inscribed the name, Bagger, on the metal object that had almost served as a murder weapon. I took the metal object up to my room and mounted it on the shelf in the closet where I displayed it as a trophy memorializing my victory over the Bagger.

Driver's License

My driver's license needed to be replaced, so I rode with my father to the DMV. I noticed a tall, muscular man having a discussion in the back office. He looked out of place as if he were from the state police. Libidos pulled me in different directions, so I acted erratically as I waited in line. The confusion that I created must have caused one of the employees to mistake my dad's proof of identity with my own. After my new license was completed, I noticed that the weight listed on the card was two hundred pounds. I was currently at one hundred seventy pounds. Even stranger, my eyes in the photograph appeared violet, not the color that I expected my eyes to be, green.

Druid Circle

I involuntarily stood on my feet in the basement and began walking a circular path. I kept my balance as I carefully stepped over the obstacles that cluttered the basement floor. Near the circle's completion, I fell to my knees and crawled under a table that was positioned in front of the chair in which I sat when smoking herbal incense. I then reversed directions and crawled underneath the table for a second time. After I had gotten on my feet I walked around the circle in the opposite direction, a means by which to reestablish the circle. Inside the circle, I

had created sacred Druid ground. When I occupied the space underneath the table, others in the telepathy chain were unaware of my presence and unconscious of my voice.

Druid Marriage

In the basement, the walls were formed from different concrete blocks that were placed side by side. The creases between the blocks of concrete appeared as vertical lines. There were three indents that were created by the steel suspension rods, one on each line. I used my electronic cigarette as a wand. When focusing my eyes on the end of it, blowing or sucking on it made my eyes cross. In my vision, I moved the lines and holes so that they were over top of one another. When my eyes crossed correctly, a single line with a column of three heads appeared. The image served as a learning function. It was a diagram that represented the marriage practices of the druids.

The druids had an institution of marriage that I thought resembled how elephants mated. A younger woman and an older woman married a single man. When the older woman died, the marriage dissolved, and the younger woman entered a new marriage as an older wife. She was no longer responsible for reproduction. She, instead, helped to raise children born to her new, younger female counterpart. The husband, who had outgrown his position as father, retired from all but one social role, grandfather. The role encumbered him with fending for the reputation of his male grandchildren. I remember doing exercises to memorize the relationships formed from successive generations of a Druid lineage and tried to retain knowledge of the obligations prescribed as part of the Druid social roles.

Athena

I was in a trance as I merrily bounded the sidewalks of Frankfort. In search of someone else, I hummed the melody, “Ba...dah...dump...bump...bump.” It was a calling that I had sent

to my reincarnation sister in past lives. When I had wanted to telepathically communicate with her, I had summoned her by humming the melodious chant. After calling her a few times, I had a vision. A British professor raised her head and looked baffled. She then had an outpouring of emotions. She had raptures by realizing that she had lived as Athena in a former life.

Pied Piper

As Julius Caesar in a former life, I had encountered the Helvetians. They were trying to leave Trans-Alpine Gaul by crossing a major river. I prohibited the tribe from making such a migration, but they tried the crossing anyway. I fortified my position and prevented the tribe from reaching the other shore. Realizing that a confrontation was a lost cause, elder tribal members came to me and begged for mercy. They threw themselves on the ground before my feet and wept as they addressed me. I allowed them free voyage back to the shore from which they had come.

As the tribe made their way back, I felt something ailing me. I detected telepathic messages that might be the cause of the problem. I looked at the children of the Helvetians. They were chanting, “Black ball...black ball...black ball...You want a cookie?” underneath their breath. I shouted at the little brats that I didn’t want a cookie and forbid them from using black magic. I warned them that if I ever heard such spells again, I’d impose severe punishment by making them Tunises, confining to the depths of the ocean.

Harry Potter Children

An epidemic took place in Britain. Children who had been diagnosed as autistic had entered catatonic states. The only stimulation that moved them to speak or interact with others was a reading from Harry Potter. Their little heads started to vibrate when they listened to the prose. Experts instructed parents of the afflicted youth to engage their children by challenging them to

recite magical spells. The little ones chanted, “Black ball...black ball...black ball.” Athena took it upon herself to investigate the situation. She revealed that the children were being indoctrinated into illuminati at an unusually early age. The “Little shits,” as Athena referred to them, were quite complicit in acts intended to harm me. Parents of the Harry Potter children despised me because of my alternative libertine lifestyle. Parents instructed children to believe that I was a moral inferior, a half-life. Therefore, it was appropriate for them to hurt me by targeting my body with mentally envisioned black balls. All along, the children were led to believe that they were playing a game designed for their edification.

The Pegases

As the three blonde women later reported, crowds had encircled me. The chants of the crowd degraded me, causing my quale to shift to states of emotional distress. Other times, the chants afflicted me with physical discomfort, such as sharp pains to the back. Positioned within the crowd of illuminati, the three women struggled to understand the point of the hateful activity. They pushed and squirmed until they saw the recipient of the attacks. Finally working their way to the front of the crowd, they took the opportunity to communicate with me telepathically. I sat in front of the wall, smoking herbal incense. I heard a voice from a woman that came from one of the figures in the mural that appeared on the concrete. She dropped from a suspension and assumed a position in front of me. I saw her translucent image. Along came another woman who fell from the wall. They both sat down on the table and crossed their legs.

They conversed with me, acting as if they were college students flirting their professor. They feigned an interest in what I said while laughing so I knew that they really cared not at all about the subject of which I spoke. After meeting the two women, a third introduced herself. Collectively, the three formed the Pegases. The women had the following names: Passion,

Transgression, and Devotion. Passion, the first to have dropped down, was from London. Devotion, who quickly accompanied Passion, was from Glasgow. Transgression, whom I met last, lived in Manchester. The gods had just incorporated the three into the telepathy chain. Prior to their involvement in the millennium, they worked as reporters for the Times of London, a metropolitan paper that had recently been bought by Rupert Murdoch. I had face-to-face interactions with all three women in the years leading up to my psychosis. Although the encounters were brief, each one left me with an enduring memory.

I danced with Transgression at Rosebud, a nightclub in Pittsburgh. I was there with several my friends from high school about a year after I had started graduate school. It was during the incipient stages of my crack addiction. I was standing on the dancefloor when she approached me. He began dancing by turning her back to me and extending her rear in my direction. She had on a short, nylon skirt. I remember thinking that she looked European. After a minute or two, she said over her shoulder, “I’m going to get a drink.” Not being confident with women, I neglected to follow her.

Years later, she informed me by telepathy that she had researched me while I was a student at Lafayette College. The Times of London gambled that I was a proper subject of a human-interest story. The paper included in Transgression’s contract a multimillion-pound incentive that extended the glamorous-looking reporter one opportunity to get me to ask her out on a date. If the courtship led to marriage, she was awarded the bonus. Transgression chose to take her chance at the Pittsburgh nightclub. Unfortunately for me, I didn’t respond to her flirtations and the bonus was lost. After I had publicly humiliated myself at SUNY at Albany, Transgression picked up the story again. She became my advocate by effectively convincing the Dean that I didn’t have narcissistic personality disorder, and, instead, suffered from mental

illness. Her persuasion thwarted the disciplinarian psychologist's plans to have me removed from the sociology program. Unfortunately, she lost her job because she shared her notes without her employer's authorization. Rupert Murdoch, who owned the paper, blackballed her from the journalism industry without informing her. She searched aimlessly for another position as a journalist for months before realizing what had happened.

I had met Passion at the Panera Bread in Frankfort, IL. She was with a toddler who was preoccupied with hugging a tree. She kept warning him, "They're going to call you a tree hugger..."

I walked past, smiled, and said, "You better watch out. He might be on Phish tour in a couple of years." The tall, blonde-haired woman erupted with laughter. I continued walking into Panera's where the manager, who overheard, gave me a free order. Apparently, he admired my folksiness. During our telepathic communications, Passion revealed that she also worked at the Times of London. She took over my story after Transgression had been dismissed and was given the same opportunity as the first reporter. If she could successfully get me to ask her on a date and eventually marry me, she'd earn a multi-million-pound bonus. After she failed, she was fired and blackballed for not divulging that she was already married on her background check.

I encountered Devotion in Albany, NY. I was in an Office Depot trying to make copies for an upcoming class at Siena College. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw an unusually attractive, blond-haired woman who had said something in a Russian accent. I asked the lovely woman to help make copies for me. She consented. I paid for the single piece of decorative paper that she was apparently there to purchase. When walking through the parking lot, she turned her head to look at me. I wanted to ask her out on a date but thought that it would be inhospitable to place a foreigner in such an awkward position. Instead, I looked at her quickly and climbed into

my car. Devotion lasted for a few years on her job after meeting me, but she too was terminated and blackballed.

The Pegases had one child each. I was exploring my former life as Julius Caesar, so I tried to make decisions that reflected how Caesar might have conducted himself if placed in my situation. After learning that I was destined to marry the Pegases, I volunteered to adopt their children. The three children suffered their own forms of hardship. Robert, who was Passion's boy, was diagnosed as autistic. Schoolmates ridiculed Jamie, Devotion's girl, for being overweight. Observing his mom's depression after she had lost her job adversely affected Radcliffe, the son of Transgression. Due to the undesirable circumstances in which they found themselves, the three children were enthusiastic about the impending changes to their lives.

Pan and the Pegases

While sitting, facing the concrete, I felt an urge to push my chair in the opposite direction of the wall and to lean back my head. On one of the wooden planks on the ceiling, a notch began spinning. Out of the motion came an animated figure of Zeus. After the cartoonish depiction of Zeus had taken shape, the gods took me through a tale that involved Zeus and me. The story took place during a lifetime in the pre-Greek period in the land that is now Greece. My name was Pan. I lived as a successful merchant in a settlement along with Zeus, with whom I had an uneasy friendship. My success had allowed me to have three wives who were named Passion, Transgression, and Devotion. All three of us slept in a single bed. I made love to one of them while the remaining two enjoyed the other's company.

Although my contentment was never in question, the Pegases grew tired of the arrangement. They yearned for better looking men who could satisfy them more completely. After I had

fallen asleep one evening, the Pegases crept out of bed and left. When I awoke, I sensed their absence and at once knew that they had abandoned the marriage. Zeus soon learned of my heart-break. Enraged by the Pegases' defiance, he grabbed his axe that he used for executions and promised that I would see justice. I urged him to do nothing. I pleaded that he should let them go peacefully because I hadn't satisfied them. I explained that three wives were too many. Zeus promised to respect my wishes, but the old man left looking indignant. Zeus later tracked the women down and subjected their necks to the blade of the axe. The executions relieved me of dishonor but did nothing for the love-starved feeling in my chest and gut. These painful memories foreshadowed difficulties likely to arise in this lifetime. The Pegases weren't predisposed to remain committed to me.

Diana

Diana endorsed a plan to return humanity to a condition that resembled its state in prehistory. She argued that warfare was part of human nature. In fact, it served a valuable function for the species by forcing men to compete for survival. Men killing other men reduced male surplus. Mating with multiple women served as incentive for the strongest men to survive. Diana's intellectual tendencies were, in part, outgrowths from her life in Neolithic Britain during a period of strife. Over population had created conflict. Groups inhabiting the area abandoned horticultural practices because work in unprotected fields posed too much risk of attack. Without the renewal of resources, populations resorted to violent conflict even more as a means of procuring necessities. Bands of warriors raided neighboring settlements and provided defense against incursions by rivals. Warriors organized under Druid priestesses, who offered sexual enticements and spir-

itual interventions in exchange for oaths of loyalty. The gods gave preference to beauty when focusing their attention on human affairs, so only gorgeous women, who attracted the eyes of deities, were equipped for the role.

When making the decision to foster the identity of a Druid priestess, Diana considered that the elevated status placed a priestess in the middle of never-ending power struggles. It was a position that could shorten life, instead of protracting it. She, however, had an abundance of confidence stemming from her talent for managing men. Because warriors were always on the verge of extermination, Diana had to devise ingenious ways to channel their efforts into endeavors whose time for completion likely exceeded the length of the men's lives. They were willing to work for Diana despite knowing that they'd probably never enjoy the benefits of their labor.

Warriors had an eye for capturing unprotected human life because the prisoners that they brought back provided a spiritual resource. The sacrifice of prisoners was exchanged for considerations from gods. Diana and other Druid priestesses provided entertainment to their warriors by staging elaborate human sacrifices. Diana was renowned for enacting just the right amount of pain prior to the sacrificial victim's death. Her warriors expected to observe intense, prolonged suffering. Such displays, however, captivated attentions for only so long. A ritual murder that took too long was anticlimactic. Bringing about just the right amount of suffering maximized the theatrical effect.

Diana's craftiness afforded her the longevity necessary to cultivate trust and to forge alliances with other Druid priestesses. Her diplomatic work sought to unite Druid priestesses by establishing a coven among them. If these women worked together, they could quell violence and establish order in the region. Diana was on the brink of accomplishing her visionary plan. The beautiful Druid women convened a meeting of the coven. Diana stressed the need to cooperate

when advancing their common interests. Diana was so enthused by the gravity of the event that she gave herself over to trust and let go of her guardedness. She went around the circle to embrace each of her sisters. As she approached the final woman forming the circle, the Druid priestess revealed a dagger and stabbed Diana. The assassination of Diana destroyed the willingness to cooperate. Nothing like what Diana had assembled ever again materialized. The population implosion played out until population density thinned to the point that it counteracted the momentum of violence.

Gladiatorial Combat

I was dichotomizing between most the world's population and myself along with the handful of Druids. I had already found that non-whites along with illuminati had to be condemned to an underworld that separated them and their emotions from a new humanity. The color of the skin of some of the excluded groups' quale might react badly with the combination of emotions included in the recipe for a post pewter-age humanity. Humans in the new age could expect to feel never-ending euphoria that was free of anxieties and discomforts. The emotions of the excluded groups hadn't been factored into the design. I didn't care about psychopaths but the realization that the new humanity excluded people who were non-white gave me pause. With consideration, however, it was insufficient provocation to deter me from doing what was necessary to achieve my objectives. After all, I believed that the gods had ordained the plan to remake humanity by upgrading the human genome.

The gods had suggested that one of my weaknesses was an unwillingness to tolerate collateral damage. I was led to believe that the sacrifice of undeserving human personalities was re-

quired to succeed in the war against illuminati. Part of the maturation that I had to undergo depended upon learning to stomach such atrocities. Because I trusted what I believed to be knowledge given to me by the gods, I interpreted myself to lack the virtue of moral resolve.

Most of the Frankfort Illuminati had appeared all-but-retired for years. They parked company cars on the streets in front of their houses nearly all hours of the day. After the supply lines that delivered resources to them were severed and their household stockpiles exhausted, they'd be forced to search for food and other necessities on their own, which would take them outside of their cover. In such a state, the parasitic nature of illuminati causes them to instinctually converge upon producers. I planned with Zeus to wrangle up illuminati, who'd be found stumbling on streets that led to supermarkets. We'd march them into the high school stadium where they'd compete in gladiatorial contests.

I saw an African American during a trip to Jewel Osco. He glanced back at me as we both stood in the express isle. I took a moment to ponder what awaited him. After my eyes had teared up a bit thinking of his fate. I saw him glance back at me. After moving through the line and purchasing a couple electronic cigarettes, I returned to the house of my parents by walking on the suburban streets. The incident at the supermarket led me to reconsider the mission. I came to reinterpret my objectives and necessity of leaving behind non-white people to accomplish my goals. Trying to make sense of what the gods had communicated to me about my ordained, I explained what happened was a learning exercise. The God's were interested in cultivating my judgement by leading me through lessons that they had planned.

I had been foretold by the gods that the end was near for illuminati. Members of the group were to meet their hell-bound fate at four o'clock in the afternoon. The Illuminati condem-

nation already had a proof of concept. When walking the streets, a teenager had yelled, “Illuminati,” at me while making a gang-like hand symbol. The adolescent male who had mocked me now served as a test subject. I heard him scream as his personality sank underground until reaching heat that even memory of it was unbearable. I sat in my room facing the opened window waiting for the impending purge of illuminati from the Village of Frankfort. My enthusiasm waned as the expected time for the condemnation, four o’clock, passed without anything happening. I heard no screams from Frankfort residents. There were still people outside who appeared alive and well.

Ritual

I had to cleanse my memory house and then saturate it with libido, which I accomplished by performing rituals. The ultimate purpose of the rituals was to leave libido trails strong enough to attract the world’s population, who’d be enticed into following smells that led into my memory house. After entering my memory house, my life history became observable. Those entering my memory house became witness to crimes committed against me by Illuminati who were bent on my destruction. My memories also gave guests the opportunity to be audience to a lecture that I delivered on reincarnation called *The Sermon on The Hill*. Reincarnation was a gift from the gods. My life was the second coming of Odysseus, and it was evidence that we live more than once.

To perform the behaviors necessary for the rituals to succeed, I simply followed kneejerk reflexes and uncontrolled impulses incited by exposure to the magnetic trails circulating throughout the house. Some libidos were stronger than others. At times I had my entire body come to be controlled by magnetic electric trails around me. Nothing planned or thought out was necessary for performing the rituals. Rituals performed in the house of my memory were

harmless and posed little threat to myself. Rituals that I completed outside, on the other hand, sometimes presented risks. On occasions I was forced to trespass or manipulate neighbors' property. I frequently fiddled with neighborhood mailboxes. I opened their doors and placed in the compartment's electronic cigarette cartridges. I closed the lid to the box and retrieved the cartridges the next day. These Rituals were designed to identify neighborhood illuminati. I didn't know the mechanism through which these rituals worked, but I was confident that they'd have their intended outcome. On one instance, I trespassed. I had grabbed a pumpkin off the porch of a house and placed it inside of a house after opening the front door.

A resident Yelled from another room, "Who is it?"

I responded, "Special delivery."

The man shouted, "What is it?"

I exited the door and continued down the street before turning my head and saying, "nothing." The libidos kept me hard at work. I performed the ritual steps instructed by the libidos. Periodically, I was allowed to rest. These breaks lasted for an hour or two, ending after I was summoned to complete more tasks. The police later came to my front door and talked to my parents. I was informed by them that the neighbor could have pressed charges for trespassing, but he had declined to file a police report. My mom said that the man in the house was a psychologist sympathetic to my plight.

Libidos were related to the olfactory sense possessed by the human body, so I thought it wise for me to urinate in the vents on the floor of my closet. My urine served to mark the house with my scent intensifying the libido stored in it. After I had urinated in the vents, I noticed a family dog acting oddly outside. He seemed unsure whether to come inside or to remain outside. He kept hesitating before eventually coming back into the house.

I engaged in masturbation rituals, during which I telepathically had sex with various women who had been swept into the project. The Pegases tied up the sacrificial victim and marched her to me. Wearing ornamental grape leaves made of plastic on my head, I played the role of King Minos. The Pegases informed the victim that she was serving as a sacrifice to the Minotaur before they forced her to have telepathic sex with me as I rested on my back. Such unfortunate events were necessary to form the libido connections that would telepathically unite humanity. During these rituals, I learned of my former life as King Minos. I recalled secrets about the labyrinth in which the ritual murders of sacrificial victims took place. Apparently, the Minotaur didn't really exist. The victims, rather, walked endlessly in the maze until reaching the conclusion that death by the monster was preferable to death by dehydration. Victims who began frantically searching for the Minotaur eventually collapsing and died from dehydration. Performing rituals in Frankfort caused me to lose another twenty pounds. I plummeted to a hundred sixty pounds, a weight that I hadn't held since high school. Weary of my weight loss, I started to eat foods with high caloric content. I preferred milkshakes from a new restaurant that had just opened, which specialized in dairy products. My weight stabilized at one hundred eighty pounds.

“...Roger that...”

When I first underwent training to conduct telepathic communications, I conversed with three people. One was the devout Catholic, Mel Gibson. He was accompanied by the Pope, whom I thought to be named Richard at the time, and there was Bruce Willis. The three individuals with whom I communicated spoke words through my mouth. My voice changed so that my speech mimicked them when receiving their messages. The communications that we delivered by us to one another ended with, “...Roger that.” The gods were behind the organization of the

telepathic chain. Living on a higher scale, the divine personalities foresaw what was to happen before its finalization. They used this ability to reorder and deliver messages, so they were out of sequence, making the communications asynchronous. No participant could be certain of who was knowledgeable of what at any given time; a condition that encrypted the Millennium, concealing its communications from the intelligence gathering of illuminati.

If I telepathically communicated with a counterpart, I experienced the conversation as a sequential, turn-taking interaction. However, if I later physically approached the counterpart and inquired about the contents of our exchange, the interlocutor mightn't acknowledge our communications. This provision made it impossible to confirm knowledge that was telepathically disseminated. Sometimes, the gods extracted the contents delivered as messages from asleep individuals. The gods meddled with the quale of the sleeping subject until producing an imagined scenario in his dream state. The gods observed the reaction of the subject to the dream and later designed telepathic messages based upon the experiment's results.

The strangest character in the whole scenario was Richard, the Pope. He was the first Irishman to have ascended to the Papacy. As it turned out, he was a child molester, who had escaped from prison by whispering behind the heads of prison guards. He found refuge by hiding as a member of the clergy all the while committing various other crimes. He managed to climb to position of Pope in the church. He was Illuminati. I didn't realize that the Pope was really named Francis until I disobeyed my instincts by researching who the present Pope by looking it up in the Wikipedia.

After I discovered Richard was an imposter, he dropped out of the affair, leaving me free to converse with the real Catholic Holy Man as he slept. I had established communications with Francis while walking through Frankfort. I marched at a fast pace until I came to a neighboring

housing plan still under construction. There I saw a rabbit. I stopped and returned the stare that the animal gave me. A short moment passed before I resumed walking. I travelled about a block and then looked to my right. Again, I saw the rabbit, who had apparently followed me. I made a right turn to return to my house and saw the rabbit a third time. I thought of it as miraculous.

Francis was vicariously present via telepathy during my encounter with the rodent. His observation of the strange inter-species interaction made him enthusiastic about humanity's prospects for experiencing a transformative event. Mel Gibson and Bruce Willis were visible to me in translucent form when I telepathically conversed with them. I was assured that we were on the same side, fighting a group named Illuminati.

Every so many thousands of years an epoch struggle occurred. A war of telepathy took place in which participants sang chants intended to disconnect their adversaries from humanity. On this occasion, I along with others tried to sever illuminati ties to humanity. Originally, losing the battle of telepathy entailed getting blackballed from a mating practice called the line dance. The line dance, now an archaic rite, originated at the dawn of human existence. It was a mating ritual in which all the various human tribes belonging to a proto humanity gathered *en masse* to facilitate interbreeding among them. Men and woman lined up across from one another, moving positions until satisfied with a partner from another tribe whom they faced. Getting blackballed from the line dance ensured the extinction of the ostracized tribe. The banished group splintered from humanity and went extinct becoming an evolutionary ancestor of homo sapiens.

Proconsuls

I sat in my basement, facing the concrete wall. After learning that I was Odysseus in a former life, I became aware of several other identities that I had during former lives. Now convinced that I was Caesar, I seized the opportunity to chastise a former rival. It became clear

to me that Michael Parenti had been Pompey in his former life. As Pompey, he demonstrated illuminati tendencies by marching East in a campaign for fortune and infamy. His younger counterpart, on the other hand, marched westward into the violent and untamed depths of Gaul. Caesar sought to civilize the most savage part of the world, one plagued by perpetual feuding and regular human sacrifice. He also looked to rescue the reincarnation of his Druid tribe member, Diana.

I was intent upon never letting Parenti forget his past affiliation. That is why I had crawled to his statue on the Ides of March. By doing this, I deposited a breadcrumb that later reminded myself in a future life that Pompey was illuminati. I had telepathic visions, in which I had Parenti tied against a whipping post. I personally administering blow after blow, saying with each strike, “Whip it into you, Parenti...whip it into you...you were Pompey.”

Although not by the sound of it, malice didn’t motivate my treatment of Parenti. The affair was lighthearted. He had reformed himself, now serving as evidence that illuminati members weren’t hopelessly enslaved. In fact, no personality was ever permanently enslaved, automatically entering it into servitude each lifetime. The personality’s ability to liberate itself from the grip of illuminati persisted despite past lifetimes, during which the personality was totally immersed in the group.

Reincarnation Build up and Break Down

After making my way from the wooden stairs to the floor of the basement, without any planning or rehearsal, I began doing the steps of a waltz. I hummed the melody of a waltz as I took notice of my feet dancing the steps. In the periphery of my vision, I saw the hair of a moustache extending from my face. I realized that I was revisiting my life as Martin Heidegger. I had just raptured by going into a trance in which I chanted something about my former life.

Not only had I been an arch-conservative Catholic in a past life, but I had also been Aristotle, which took place before my life as Julius Caesar. Deliberately delaying further reincarnation until the age of Modernity I dropped down during the nineteenth century and suffered as Van Gogh. I next chose Germany as a birthplace to offer the opportunity to be part of a high point in the Western tradition, the Weimar Republic, where Hannah Arendt lived as a young woman. She was the reincarnation of Aphrodite, a former romantic interest of mine.

When upstairs I used art supplies to document my former lives on sacred parchment. I completed my reincarnation genealogy in short time. Afterwards, I decorated the list of signatures with drawings and applied a few colors to the canvas in a post hoc attempt to provide background. I was impressed with the results of my first sketching. The illustrated manuscript was important for both the religiosity it conveyed and the aesthetics it embodied.

Inspired by John Mapplethorpe and his avant-garde use of profane substances into which he placed sacred objects, I dowsed the parchment with my urine and saliva before rolling it up to protect it from getting damaged. Days after the artwork's completion, Satan convinced me that the work was a suitable gift for Barbara. The offering might encourage our reconciliation as neighbors. I saw Barbara outside in her front yard gardening, so I exploited the opportunity. She faced away from me as I approached. Sensing my presence, she turned around. Seeing her face, I said, "Please accept a peace offering."

Barbara screamed, "Get away from me!" I at once reversed direction and walked away.

Others in the telepathic chain came forward to claim what had been my former lives. The historical identities became a part of their own reincarnation genealogies. I realized that the only other lifetime I had of any notoriety was Odysseus. I declared, "Odysseus," to be my persisting

identifier. It would serve as my name in each of my lifetimes thereafter. I didn't find the reduction of my identities troubling or disappointing. I was satisfied with only having been Odysseus and having been in my present life Russell. Odysseus' life was given more stature, but my life as Russell had enough accomplishments to support my self-esteem.

Retribution

I rested under the table in the cellar for hours in preparation for my assault upon the Albany counselor. My attempt at inducing hypnosis was intended to divorce the counselor from her life companion, cigarettes. I suggested that she yak after each inhalation of tobacco smoke. This was retribution for the years that I had suffered spells of uncontrollable coughing.

The fits that I had struck me multiple times a day. Although they could take place at any time, they occurred mostly during inopportune moments, such as when I taught classes. Before the intervention, I had attributed the coughing fits to the bath salts I was regularly freebasing.

I discovered that the coughing fits were not a consequence of unhealthy habits. They were induced by hypnosis. I had overheard Sheila and Deidra, who apparently by accident spoke into the wrong microphone, so they were audible to me, planning to induct me into hypnosis and instruct me to cough. When this had been done to me before I had an irritation in my tonsils, a ticklishness that intensified until I needed to cough to relieve it. Coughing was rarely sufficient for the sensation to end, and the spells often lasted for ten to fifteen minutes.

Transmissions

My discovery of the hypnosis that was behind my coughing spells begged the question, how long had a transponder been active inside me? How long had I been the subject of harmful

psychological manipulation? Candy had been my dentist for years and he had performed root canals shortly after I became his patient. I already suspected that he was the culprit responsible for implanting the device, but didn't realize just how early on in our relationship he had done so.

Choice

I had a vision while in the attic. I had met her once while canvassing my parents' neighborhood to get signatures for a Green Party candidate. After knocking on the door, an older, attractive woman greeted me and graciously signed the petition. I later learned from my mother that she was a nurse. More than two decades ago, she worked as a nurse in buffalo and happened to be on staff at the time my mother gave birth to me. She probably observed my parents and noticed that my mom was shy and had few social graces. Although she was university educated, she had a diminutive self-confidence that made her self-conscious and overly self-critical. She compensated for her self-doubt by compulsively preparing for challenges that lay ahead. She eventually graduated from the University of Pittsburgh's MBA program. Despite her good grades, she didn't have the right temperament for business management. Following failed attempts at working in business, she began slowly retooling herself by accepting temporary work and eventually landing a permanent job as a technical writer.

My dad was an intelligent man who did well enough in high school to get accepted into Brown University. While at Brown, however, he felt disaffected by the student body, and his alienation led him off course academically. He attended events that he found intellectually interesting but routinely cut classes that he found unstimulating. He failed out of Brown multiple times before the school asked him not to return.

My father was committed to the preservation of constitutional liberties and felt personally bound to intervene if he witnessed their abuse. His activism was practiced on an individual basis.

When attending Brown University, he walked around campus with an illicit copy of the *Tropic of Cancer*, protesting Brown's compliance with the Rhode Island statute that illegalized possession of the book. He displayed a copy of the novel when in the presence of university authorities.

The background of the married couple made their newborn child an ideal specimen for classified human research. My father's intellectual confidence disposed him to trust his instincts and prejudices. My mother's lack of self-confidence made defer to my father's judgments. Such traits to their personalities caused them to overlook anomalies present in their social environment. More importantly, it was unlikely that they would ever accumulate the resources necessary to protect their child from predatory forces in national security and the intelligence.

I remember a pediatric appointment at an early age. When in the examination room, I completed an activity designed to measure my cognitive development. I was instructed to draw a picture of a man. The portrait that I illustrated had all the expected body parts except for hair on the figure's head. The doctor looked at the drawing and informed my mother of my potential sociopathy. The doctor said that the absence of hair was demonstrative of a tendency to dehumanize others. It was not until years later that I realized that my drawing wasn't flawed because not all people have hair on their head. In fact, not all people have all the expected body parts. Although my mother didn't seem to think anything of it, for me the incident remained memorable into adulthood.

Bethlehem

Over my shoulder, I saw images of large heads. Tina Fay and Alec Baldwin hovered over me. They, at first, appeared to be supportive of my efforts, but their approval changed to condemnation after they were exposed to my life history.

I mostly ignored them so that I could remain on task. My perception was in the process of reconstituting space and objects in its ontology. I crossed my eyes so that the grass on either side of the sidewalk merged to obscure the pavement below me. Every few steps I pointed my wand and declared, “Bethlehem.” The activity defined a boundary between spaces in Frankfort and spaces in a new city. The space that I carved out was a sanctuary for people who weren’t illuminated. It was named after Bethlehem and would retain that name for the ages.

Pilgrimage

I already knew that I had a final trip ahead of me, a pilgrimage that would lead me back to Pittsburgh and its suburb, Upper St. Clair. I questioned whether I should include Albany, NY in my travels, but the gods warned that I should fear returning to the city where I had attended graduate school. I had been practicing for the voyage by driving around my parents’ neighborhood by following magnetic trails that guided me in different directions. I drove around the block and turned on various streets following the libidos until they pulled me back to the house.

When the time came, I departed eastward. For the most part, the libidos navigated me toward my destination. However, I sometimes got libido trails confused and mistakenly got off at exits that led off course. In that event, I reassumed course using GPS. The police cited me three times for speeding. Fortunately, I was in Ohio, instead of Illinois, when I got two of the tickets. Otherwise, I would have lost my license for exceeding the maximum number of points allowed by Illinois.

During the day, going down the interstate, I saw red-tailed hawks ahead of me flying in circles above the road. I was certain that the appearance of birds of prey was a sign from Zeus, communicating to me that I was travelling in the right direction. I failed to consider that it was

spring and there might be other explanations for their behavior. I believed that what I had witnessed were omens.

I managed to make my way to Western Pennsylvania before nightfall and drove into Upper St. Clair. I needed to find ground zero, the location where a new history would begin. Deciding that the high school stadium was the most likely place, I drove up the hill and into the school parking lot. There was an excess of cars, but I managed to find a spot. I walked to the stadium. I was confident that I was about to confront my fate, so my emotions plummeted after I saw teenagers in white gowns sitting in rows. It was the graduation ceremony. With dismay, I returned to my car and navigated back toward the interstate.

Failing to fulfill my mission and to end my torment, I decided to return to Chicago. In the evening, after the skies had darkened, new personalities appeared in my mind's eye. Socrates and Plato spoke to me. We searched for commonalities in our experiences. But their presence didn't compensate for the pain caused by my journey's prolongation. Voices had afflicted me for approximately a year and a half. The torment had subsided, but my yearning for silence and solitude had not.

I made it most of the way there, but I decided to follow libido trails that were strongly detectable. They caused me to go off course and enter Michigan. Mostly on country roads, I crisscrossed up the state to Lake Huron. During this stage of the journey, I became confident again that the libido trails would lead to where the Dionysian ritual was planned, so I put aside my GPS and let the magnetism guide me.

I was on a country road going the speed limit when I passed two people having a conversation on the other side of a truck. The man, who was talking to a woman, must have thought I was going too fast because he yelled something at me. I raised my hand with my

middle finger extended. The man leaped into action and ran to his truck in pursuit of me. I feared physical attack, so I sped up trying to avoid an altercation. I knew that he must be Illuminati. They had to prevent the Dionysian ritual or else they'd lose control of humanity. After going for miles on dirt roads at a fast pace, I lost sight of the Illuminati agent in my rear-view mirror. I slowed down and attempted to feel libidos that would guide me back on course.

The libidos grew in intensity, which meant that I was nearing ground zero. I parked my car on the side of the road, got out, and hiked over a hill to railroad tracks. I took off my shirt and began marching down the tracks toward what would be the completion of my mission.

Before exiting the car, I was convinced that I was Dionysus. I called my parents and explained to my mother that I was a god. She unsuccessfully tried to talk me down before I scolded her and hanged up.

Remembering that I was also Lionysus in a former life, I yelled, "Hempa...hempa...hemp ...hemp...", as I pretended to execute ancient drills with an imagined spear. I marched for hours before I came to a small town with an inland lake next to it. A libido pulled me to a shed. Walking up to it, I tried glancing into one of its windows, but tarps that were suspended on the inside blocked my view. I contemplated breaking in but thought better of it. The structure was too small to house all the participants to the event.

I walked farther into the town. I found a vendor next to a lake and ordered ice cream and a beverage to avoid dehydration. I concluded that there was no congregation of women waiting to mate with me. Nearing collapse, I began the three-mile hike back to my car. Fortunately, I had the rails to follow so I found my way.

After arriving where I had parked, I knew that my fortune had worsened. My car had been towed with my phone in it. My only recourse was to borrow a phone from a resident of a

house nearby. I approached a country home and knocked on the door. The owner's son, who was on the street, saw me and offered to get his father. I asked the man for his phone. The boy's father informed me that he had already called the police, so I sat down on his porch and waited. The man called his boy and instructed him to get for me a bottle of water.

The two officers who arrived questioned me. I told them that I was a tourist and that I had decided to hike to a nearby town on a lake. Visibly annoyed by my story, they informed me that people had been searching for me after my abandoned car had been sighted. I apologized for the confusion and enquired about the location of my vehicle. The police officers drove me to the tow lot that had my car. There was a motel next to it, where I stayed the night.

The next day I started my journey back to Frankfort. I stopped at a Dollar Store to buy new attire because the smell of my body and clothes nauseated me. I had departed with no other clothes than what I was wearing, and they had long been saturated with sweat. After driving a few hours, I experienced panic attacks from the accumulating stress that came from my inability to escape from the situation in which I found myself. I looked for a motel because I believed that I could only survive if I found sanctuary. Without such safe space, I might become volatile in public. I rested for a couple of hours before departing again. Before long, I experienced another panic attack. I had been certain that my odyssey was reaching its conclusion, but there was still no perceivable end. I remained lost in a subjectivity conflicting with a reality that proved intransigent. Each time I thought that my deliverance was imminent what I came to experience failed to comply with the optimistic expectations that I had. I returned to my parent's house and attempted to explain the reason for my departure. Rethinking my daily routine, I knew that I needed to restock my supply of herbal incense. I ordered more of it from an online vendor.

Hypnotic Knots

The psychological process of summersaulting resembles what critical theorists have referred to as reification. Reification involves institutions taking on a life of their own so that they appear to exist apart from the social practices that constitute them. My concern, however, was more psychological not sociological. I was interested in reification on an individual level not one that was social, making it more constructivist in orientation than constructionist.

Summersaulting transforms assumptions that are made early in the belief-systems development into unassailable principles. The assumptions are originally a starting point that provides the bases of a framework for understanding the empirical problem. The adoption of assumptions is done with a lack of certainty because evidence in support of the assumption is never conclusive, and the assumption is adopted despite the possibility of alternative assumptions that conceptualized the problem differently.

Assumptions create patterns of interpretation. After defining the whole, closer scrutiny directs attention to additional observations of parts that belong to the whole. These parts are to some degree anticipated because knowledge of the whole can create expectations of parts that belong to it. The observation of facts that are identified by the investigation as relevant provide details that provide more extensive knowledge of the object. Statements that record these details came into the purview of the investigation's research because of expectations derived from assumptions that defined the object. The facts that are identified by a selective process that excludes other facts that aren't predicted to be relevant. The facts that are accumulated are eventually interpreted as evidence in support of the original assumptions.

As more observations are gathered, experiences sediment upon the memory of the adoption of the initial assumptions. What was once a decision that was made without certainty and

not in the absence of other possibilities loses its arbitrariness and transforms into something irrefutable. The more we distance ourselves from the point in time when we made the decision to adopt the assumptions, the more difficult it is to remember the uncertainty of the decision and less inclined we are to question the assumption's veracity.

In the case of hypnosis, the core propositions are inserted into the mind of the subject so they are accepted as beliefs and their certainty is never in question. Unlike assumptions, they aren't adduced from incomplete or inconclusive evidence. For most of the time that I was hypnotized, I never questioned the sincerity and accuracy of the person doing the hypnosis. It didn't occur to me that new beliefs implanted in my head were untested or, worse, fabricated.

Satan the God

The gods made love by nestling into their partner so that their bodies united into the shape of a ball. As they maintained the geometric figure, the two of them created friction between their bodies by summersaulting repeatedly. Their lovemaking led them to transverse the surface of earth. Sometimes they took breaks to climb to their feet so they could explore striking landscapes.

When not exploring and making love, the Gods worked in solitude conducting experiments. Satan's experiments were designed to investigate pain. He studied the sensation by using lower lifeforms as research specimens. After exacting extreme amounts of pain from his research specimens, Satan recorded their reactions. Eventually Satan observed signs that he might await reprisal from the organisms populating his petri dish. His misgivings caused him to do backward somersaults, distancing himself from the creatures that he had tormented. He rolled backward until colliding into Saturn, where he made refuge. All along, Satan had been studying himself.

He wanted to learn about pain, but his fear of the sensation prevented him from experiencing it firsthand.

Satan, the Sultan

Satan dwelled on Saturn in the tallest of the high-rise towers, where he carefully managed the planet's hierarchical social arrangement. Satan was a Sultan. Every inhabitant on Saturn was enslaved, but some of the sultan's slaves held higher statuses than others. If an individual was the overlord of two or more people, he was a minion. Those with only one person under their control were Munnion Onions. Everyone else was a hopeless slave.

One's place in the hierarchy determined the amount of pleasure that he enjoyed. Satan, who stood atop the order, felt pleasures that were extracted by all those below. Minions experienced less pleasure than Satan but remained relatively well off, because more people stood below them than above. Slaves, on the bottom of the hierarchy, were deprived of all pleasures. They were left with only discontent and anguish.

Minions served a special function for the sultan. Satan ordered his aristocracy to infiltrate the inhabitants of other planets to prepare the world for invasion. If the minion was unsuccessful on his mission, he suffered demotion, which entailed losing his slaves. If the minion achieved his objectives, he retained his station, but a more difficult mission always awaited. Satan's incentive system motivated even in the absence of real reward because emotional distress from the anticipation of the mission that laid ahead offset any pleasure or satisfaction derived from downtime.

After a mission failure, Satan promised the disgraced minion another chance. Satan made assurances not to impose a complete forfeiture of slaves upon the minion, allowing him to retain a minion or a Munnion Onion status. After the relieved man expressed his gratitude, Satan informed the minion that he had lied. He took his time reveling in the tears of the former minion,

whose status had just been demoted to that of a slave. Off the man was taken and crucified, a death that prepared him to be more servile after reincarnation. Eventually, everybody under Satan's control became a slave.

Satan frightened me considerably. If I was subjected to his telepathic instructions for too long, I might be converted into one of his slaves. Ignoring my fears, I telepathically combated Satan. I ducked in and out of Satan's sights, attempting to draw his attention so that I could distract him. I rushed behind him and sent a message intended to alter his quale. If I undermined his self-confidence, then he might lose his nerve and become incapacitated.

Satan the Recluse

In a former lifetime, the Dali Lama was a lover of animals, who lived in seclusion. Sheep horns protruded from the cap on his head, accentuating his animalistic appearance. He spent much of his time reclining on his thrown while baring an expression that conveyed boredom.

I had a troubled relationship with Dali Lama. He was protective of his daughter and resented me for chastising her for her lack of devotion to the mission. After all, following the liberation my house in Ithaca, I had taken Penelope near what became the city of Sparta to a cave that served as a place of execution. Before pushing her down the abyss, I consoled Penelope by informing her of reincarnation. I suspected that the Dali Lama's advice about peace offerings and reconciliation between Barbara and me was retribution for my treatment of Penelope. He spent hours comforting and advising his daughter. She seemed at peace letting me die at the hands of her family, so that she was free to pursue a life of pleasure with Hades.

PsyDrifters

With her thumb extended from her clinched fist, playing the role of a hitchhiker, the old woman, who had called me an asshole in the Albany counseling center, spoke to other passer byes with the words, “Hey, heading my way... We’ll meet again someday.”

They were psychopathic hobos obsessed with networking. They drifted, ran into one another, and networked until their associations culminated into a social group that they called illuminati. Illuminati gathered in metropolitan spaces to discuss plans to eliminate society’s degenerates. After they had selected a target, their fun began. They wore vintage costumes and performed dance moves as they sang chants directed at the back of their subject’s head. They inducted the subject into hypnosis so that he could be hypnotized to feel as if he were confined and helpless. In addition to the malevolent hypnosis, Illuminati socially isolated the victim so that he lacked exposure to other types of socialization that could counteract the self-destructive beliefs that illuminati were working for to instill in him. Illuminati eventually took over the victim’s impulses and thought processes so they could steer their victim along a course to his death.

Origin Myth of Illuminati

The origins of the Illuminati trace back to the beginning of humanity. In its primordial condition, humanity was organized into a system of lineages in which reincarnation occurred according to predictable patterns. Knowing roughly who’d be reincarnated in each new generation of his lineage, Saturn, first of the homo sapiens, took the opportunity to learn how to enslave personalities.

He practiced on his daughters. As soon as they could stand upright, the girls were instructed to stack wood. Piece by piece, the young girls built a stairway whose final step was positioned above the house’s fire. At the age of six, the daughter put the final piece of wood in

place, completing the steps. Saturn commanded the daughter to continue climbing the wooden structure until she stepped off its end and fell into flames. On her sixed birthday, the girl plunged into the fire's ambers, only to be destined to repeat the ritual after reincarnating. Saturn's experiment caused the personality of the daughter to never mature past the age of the traumatic event; a developmental impairment that compromised her maturity and decision making.

This bizarre ritual evolved into the modern practices of Illuminati. Daughters, who were projected to be beautiful, were not named until the age of six. The lack of a name resulted in a subhuman identity that became part of a deprecated self-concept. The beautiful women of the Illuminati lacked the self-worth necessary to conceive of themselves independently from their patriarchal families.

Illuminati Fathers selected husbands for their daughters to marry. The daughter was incapable of loving her husband. The daughter had been raised to ensure her continued loyalty and devotion to her father. The romantic attractions of the daughters were reserved for another purpose, an Illuminati sport. The challenge consisted of manipulating the quale of human prey so that their emotions were configured to produce suicidal impulses. The specially trained women of the Illuminati were central to the predatory challenge.

Illuminati women targeted non-illuminati males during periods in their life when the men were vulnerable due to their impoverishment and isolation. The Illuminati daughter staged appearances in the background of the victim's presence. Her visibility was intended to attract the attention of the victim and eventually coax him into falling in love with her. Likewise, the female illuminatus taught herself to love the victim.

The female illuminatus mesmerized the victim without ever initiating contact or communication with him. After she had given the victim ample time to fantasize about an

impending romance, she followed her father's command and departed from the victim's environment altogether. If the victim interpreted the beautiful woman's disappearance as abandonment or rejection, his emotional despair might incite suicidal ideations.

Meaghan Lewis served as an illuminati agent deployed by her father to destroy me. Her involvement in her family's plot accounted for why she appeared in the background at the College of DuPage. She had trained for the family project by reviewing my life history. She read my favorite books. She even tried understanding one of my pastimes by smoking synthetic cannabis. After smoking the spiked foliage, she passed out for several hours only to awaken in laughter. She successfully attracted my attention and caused me to reflect upon her. The time she had spent studying and tracking me were enough for her to spark an affection for me that she nurtured into love.

No illuminati hunt had ever succeeded. The victims never had their quale arranged so that they committed suicide. Stephen Lewis was well-aware of the likelihood of failure. He hoped that his use of the latest psychoanalytical research would provide the means for me to be bagged during his family's safari. He commissioned the assistance of the Albany counselor, who said, "Blah," while making an arm gesture with a cigarette dangling from her fingers, each time she ordered a plan to bring about my demise. She was confident that I'd have a self-inflicted death. To the silver-haired lawyer's chagrin, I was more resilient than he had anticipated. Although captivated at times, I was largely unconcerned with Meaghan Lewis. Instead, I was preoccupied with resisting the sobriety that the intervention tried to impose.

Her failure to appear in Celina was a devastating blow but it didn't prove to be a dead end. Suicide remained in the back of my mind because it provided an escape from my torment, but there was an alternative that promised not just liberation but life as well. I'd continue a

defensive strategy that resisted the intervention until it broke down because of resource restraints. Even if the intervention had no limitations, the thought of finalizing a Lewis victory inspired my unyielding resistance.

Illuminati

I was walking upstairs to my room in my parent's house. Looking out the window into the backyard, I had a vision. There was a path leading to the house. Both sides of it were lined with crucifixes. Humanity had waged an age long war against Illuminati: an organization whose members lived parasitically off humans. In fact, for a time, I referred to Illuminati as vampiracy. Illuminati didn't produce anything themselves. They only invested what they already had, never doing any work. Illuminati evolved to have an instinctual fear of ordinary people, because if producers became aware of the needlessness for illuminati, ordinary people might mobilize and eliminate the parasitic vampires. Illuminati have historically safeguarded their position in society by learning to manipulate quale to produce fear and distrust among people, so that vampiracy is left unchallenged.

I knew the game that Illuminati were playing. I had learned how to speak behind the heads of people so that I could affect their flow of quale. My skirmish with Satan allowed me to become a veteran of telepathic combat. I now looked for other illuminati to fight.

I found myself behind the Albany counselor in the telepathy chain. I saw a translucent, faint image of her in front of me. Seizing the opportunity, I hypnotically instructed her to, "Feel sunk." I saw an image of her bending over in despair. I suggested, "...Have another vodka tonic." For whatever reason, I assumed that it was her cocktail of choice.

One adversary who concerned me lived across the street. Barbara had performed a spell that she used to conjure chronic pain to my upper back. To cast the spell, Barbara completed the

steps of a ritual that required trespassing in the house of my memories. She strapped a stuffed animal onto the wheel of a stationary bicycle, which was kept in her master bedroom. She pressed her feet against the peddles and caused the wheel to spin. The stuffed animal rotated on the wheel. After rolling it over several times, the toy had been knotted. She waited until she believed that nobody was present in my house. When launching her plan, she grabbed the stuffed animal and did something fairly daring for a suburban housewife. She entered through the door to my house that was often left unlocked so she could climb the stairway to the second floor. After walking several steps down the hallway, she came to headquarters and placed the stuffed animal among articles of clothing gathered in a pile on a chair.

By trespassing into my memory house, she had made the necessary preparations for the dark magic that she would soon use to vex me, which would make me feel as if I suffered the effects of a strained back muscle. Each night as she fell asleep her thoughts steered toward me. By concentrating her thoughts on me, she influenced what would be the subject of her dreams. She began harming me as soon as she was unconscious and dreaming.

At night, I saw an image of her head that bore her face as if it were latched onto me. She was visible in the reflection that I saw when glancing into the mirror. She had a face bearing a ruthless expression. I had been supplied with a plan that had been revealed from a source that was divine. It consisted of nightly exercises that culminated into an exorcism of the Neighbor from my house of memory. Standing in front of a mirror, I crossed my eyes so that two images of my body were created in the reflection of me in the mirror. I strained my eye muscles more and more strengthening my eyes. As my eye muscles grew more powerful, they could be crossed even more, causing the images to slowly move further to the sides of the mirror. With practice, my eyes crossed to the extent that the images were pushed far enough into the outside

periphery of my left and right eyesight that the two images of me, one had been on each side, were no longer visible. By conditioning my eyes so that they crossed to the extent that both images were no longer seen in the mirror's reflection, which caused Barbara to lose track of her focal point; thus, disconnecting her from the point of entry that she used to get into my memory house.

There was a potential weapon consisting of a thin plate of metal currently being unused to temporarily cover the open space where the window plate was being replaced. I weaponized it by using it as a membrane to amplify the speech that I planned to shout into it. I implemented my new weapon without much delay. I shouted chants that had as their intended target Barbara, who was the neighbor living in the house directly across the street. I improvised several attempts at inducting hypnosis.

I concluded that my attacks were unsuccessful, so I needed to change strategies. Sitting on the spare bedroom's carpeted floor, I had libidos guiding my movements. I mindlessly rotated a screw until I removed it from the window's bottom pane. By removing the screw, I thought I could lift the window out of its place in the exposure a second sheet of metal over it to amplify the volume of my chants. Unaware that nothing other than the screw held the window in place, I extracted it, and without any pause or delay the window glass was sent plummeting toward the concrete of the sidewalk. I apologized to my irate parents and swept up as many of the shards as I possibly could without spending unreasonable time.

Harold

I learned during this period of my psychosis that I had been King Harold in a former life. A stroke of bad luck, resulted in my death and the defeat of my army, which fell into disarray

following the absence of their king. My adversary, Norman the Conqueror, currently lived under the name, Stephan Lewis.

The attraction that the Pegases episodically had for me was reignited after they became aware of my Saxon identity in a former life. The Pagases and I reminisced about our former selves and our pagan beliefs and practices. Although I didn't immediately realize it, I did eventually have moments when it occurred to me that the memories we thought we shared were surely fabricated, because my forgetfulness of significant chunks of English history included Saxon England's conversion to Christianity centuries before Harold had taken the throne. Although I didn't reflect much on it at the time, the psychosis and the belief system that structured my reality had already devolved into something farcical.

Vampiracy

Vampiracy is a form of life that evolved from the practices of the most northern Germanic tribes inhabiting Europe. It originally entailed the exchange of gifts on a pagan holiday on which festivities took place that had symbolic importance. The significance and symbolism were usurped and redefined after the conversion of the northern tribes to Christianity. Vampires encouraged the continuation of gift-giving as part of the holiday because it gave them an opportunity to distribute and sometimes receive gifts, which is an excellent chance to acquire access into a memory houses.

The object that was selected by the giver reflects his personality because he either built it himself or, at the very least, selected it as an appropriate gift for the recipient. The gift's presence in the memory house influences the recipient's thoughts, who is reminded of the personality of the vampire. The vampire can influence the recipient's thoughts from afar.

I knew that the Lewis family, a cell of vampires, were trespassing in my memory house. I decided to rid the house of the Lewis family by exploiting their most annoying vulnerability, the mentally disfigured Sheila. The emotions of vampires in a cell are inter-connected and interdependent. The presence of one confident vampire serves as a sign to other vampires that they too should feel confident. If Sheila was tricked into believing that she had a hell-bound fate, then the other Lewis vampires would lose confidence and become susceptible to the suggestion as well.

At night, standing on top of the steps that led down to the cellar, I heard Sheila making cries to her family from below. Her audacity and lack of intelligence no longer had a torturous effect on me, and now worked to my advantage. The plan was to fool Sheila into believing that she was, in fact, presently in hell, already having met her fate.

The light switch on the cellar's stairwell had been disabled from the work done as a part of earlier rituals, so I had to enter the basement in near total darkness. It required summoning the courage necessary to enter the cellar without being confident of what was there. Making things worse, I'd be forced to blindly feel my way around until I located the string hanging from the lamp over the table: the closest light to the cellar steps that remained functional.

I knew that vampires found rotten food irresistible, so I pulled out the freezer's electric cord and opened its door. The next night I returned to a puddle of water that was contaminated with the blood and oil, which had thawed along with the rest of the contents from a box of frozen chicken breasts. The mess made a disgusting meal that promised to attract most any vampire. I carefully took off my clothes and used the cloth to mop up the foul cocktail. I placed the cloths in the freezer and closed its door. I then felt with my hands for the electric outlet. After grasping it, I plugged the freezer's cord back into the socket. Having completed this night's operation, I

made my way slowly through the darkness to the stairs that were partially illumined from light reaching in from the upstairs kitchen, then I climbed out of the cellar.

The next day I ventured back into the cellar to retrieve the contents that I had placed in the freezer. Sheila's attraction for the spoiled chicken caused her to spend too much time feasting and she wound up freezing among the cloths. I placed my laundry along with Sheila, who had bonded to them and now remained trapped among them, in the upstairs washing machine and I added detergent to the load. Vampires feared soap because it burned their skin. Prior to his death in the Battle of Hastings, King Harold had avoided vampire infection by protecting his anus, a frequent point of entry for the parasite, by meticulously cleaning it with soap and water after each of his defecations. While spinning around in water and soap, Sheila screamed in agony. Apparently, the pain spanned across the entirety of her body. I took pleasure listening to her cries as she rotated again and again. She survived the event but was left with the impression that she was already in hell.

Marriage

I believed that my mating practices were essential to the creation of a new human genome. I was to marry four wives. There would be a primary wife, Penelope, with whom I'd have as many children as possible. The other three wives, the Pegases, were to bare one of my children each. Additionally, I would mate with women belonging to ethnicities from all over the world. The woman would be telepathically summoned to my estate. After giving birth to a child, the woman would be banished from the grounds, forcing them to introduce the offspring to their native populations. My children would compete more effectively than others in the mating pool. Therefore, they would have greater numbers of children, who would mature to do the same.

Eventually, competitors to my descendants would no longer find mates. It would be a peaceful and gradual transition to an upgraded human genome.

After waiting months for the three British women to appear, I concluded that the marriage, which was promised by the gods, wasn't going to come to fruition. I made sense out of the unfulfilled promise by reinterpreting it as a learning exercise. I was being conditioned by the gods so that I had different cognitive/behavioral tendencies. I'd was being given defenses against delusions of grandeur that might affect my judgement. If my grandiosity returned, I'd identify it early by recognizing the early signs of its return so I could take steps to counteract it.

Evolutionary Reincarnation Biology

Evolution occurs along different scales. There is DNA evolution and there is chromosomal evolution. DNA produces traits that are observed among members of a species at a level referred to as physiological. Chromosomes, on the other hand, are associated with stock: personality traits, such as beauty, and other qualities that can be observed at scales that include individuals and lineages.

Genetic mutation is the catalyst for evolutionary change, but individual decision-making determines how biological alterations are turned into functions that we integrate into operations that we use for survival. Therefore, we shouldn't underemphasize the importance of agency for understanding evolutionary development. Stock and its explanatory salience have yet to be adequately appreciated because too much focus is on DNA.

We place too much attention upon minutia in the Age of Pewter. In fact, we are so factoid-oriented in the Age of pewter that data mining has all but become an end in itself and the data analysis that is done on its stockpiles of information continues without much evidence that it can produce anything worthwhile. Another preoccupation that is characteristic of the pewter age

is a commitment to search for the tiniest objects that constitute the elemental building blocks of larger objects. It is thought that knowledge of such things will allow for larger objects to be manipulated with enhanced precision.

Celebrity

I was smoking herbal incense at terrific quantities. Consumption of the foliage left me breathing heavily. Growing concerned with a potential heart attack; I decided to walk around the neighborhood. After marching down the street about a quarter mile, I turned around and began proceeding back to my parents' house. I was two or three houses away from my destination when I saw someone who looked like Marshall Mathers out of the corner of my eye. He was driving a white, beat-up car and wore a white tee shirt and a white headband. Oddly, he pulled into the garage a couple of houses away from my parents' home. I had an impulse to find entry but restrained myself, deciding instead to return to my parents' basement. I conjectured that people in the neighborhood were collaborating to get me arrested for trespassing or breaking and entering. It would provide justification for their restraining order against me.

An Earlier Time

Both wine and herb provide divine methods of intoxication. The patron god of Christianity habitually chews on a pipe, packed with a marijuana-like foliage. Smoking herb reduces stress and induces mild euphoria. Tunis, in contrast to the first god's preferences, enjoyed Wine. The drink inebriates, countering inhibitions. Odysseus has an affinity for smoking weed. Jehovah, on the other hand, enjoys drinking wine. The gods ordained alcohol and marijuana for human consumption.

Ramesses

Passion despised Murdoch for ruining her career in journalism, which set her on a course for revenge. I sat in the closet of headquarters and assisted Passion with hypnotic chants directed at the aging mogul as he slept. We Inserted beliefs into the psyche of Murdoch that caused him confusion during his waking hours.

One day, I entered the closet of headquarters. To my surprise, Passion no longer wished to harass her former boss. She said that he had raptured and would soon join the effort. Later, as I sat in the chair behind my desk in headquarters, I saw faint images Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity. Before I had the opportunity to speak to the two members of the chattering class, Bill and Sean began a chant that caused pain in my spine.

Rupert Murdoch, who had entered the house unannounced, made his way into headquarters. He had realized that he was Ramesses I in a former life. While reigning as Egyptian pharaoh, he was a member of illuminati. His pyramids were built as a means of signaling to extraterrestrial life. Fear of ordinary people motivated Ramesses to seek sanctuary in an alien life-form civilization. In this lifetime, however, Murdock sided against illuminati in the epoch conflict that was underway. He chastised his two subordinates and instructed them to fall into line behind me and to assist in the opposition to the real enemy, illuminati and its psychopathy.

Murdoch's son was Ramesses II. I talked to the man and boy along with the dragon lady while in the cellar.

Stoning

The gods lived in villages comprised of small huts that are built on a barren terrain covered with rocks. In the community, no laws had been established and no legal system had been institutionalized. Although the social condition was primordial, a defect made it

insufferable. Some gods were innately incorrigible. An elderly goddess had long been victimized by a violent and destructive relative. Out of sheer frustration, the goddess picked up a rock from the ground and threw it at her tormentor. Others witnessed her and imitated her violence. Soon, most of the community threw rocks at the belligerent god.

The elderly goddess' use of projectiles was institutionalized as stoning by the community. It was believed to only take place in justifiable situations because of safeguards against its inappropriate application. For example, for there to be wide-spread participation, community elders had to enlist and throw rocks themselves.

Human Justice

For humans, the ideal institution of justice consisted of only one principle: A proscription against psychopathy. Following an accusation of psychopathy, out of the community assembles a jury. After hearing the arguments made by the prosecution and the defense, the jury votes on whether to convict. If found psychopathic, there's a double appeals process. After the appeals are exhausted, the defendant must as a last resort bring forth an interpersonal relation who vouches for him. Or else, the convicted man faces execution.

The legal philosophy of Odysseus maintains that executions must be performed publicly, so that the community can observe. Public executions are designed to humiliate the condemned. Shaming prior to execution reduces recidivism after rebirth. Executions also must enact a minimum of pain to the condemned. Torturing the condemned makes the public observers more susceptible to barbarism.

Jehovah's legal philosophy departed from the legal philosophy of Odysseus in certain respects. Jehovah preferred pain to embarrassment as a corrective measure. There is to be a short scaffold and a long scaffold. The short scaffold is reserved for criminals who commit heinous

acts for which there is no rational accounting. The taller scaffold is for those who haven't committed ineffable violence.

Origin Myth of Psychopathy

Satan enjoyed experimenting on others by speaking behind their heads. He did it so much that he became unmindful of their sentience. Rather than working to achieve inter-subjectivity with interlocutors, Satan only tried to produce effects. Satan became fearful of his subjects discovering his manipulations, so he decided to make himself imperceptible to them by elevating his presence until he was out of sight. People began mindlessly assisting Satan in the construction of a new addition to his house. It was a stone tower with internal space reserved for his living chambers. The tower was built until the chamber was out of view from the ground.

Satan's only remaining companion was a female for whose affection he competed with another man. During the limited time that Satan spent outside his tower, he drove around in a dune buggy in uninhabited spaces. When on a date with his girlfriend, the two took his buggy to explore the Saturn outback. Satan stopped the buggy because his girlfriend had to relieve herself. While waiting, Satan walked away from the woman to give her privacy. His walk caused him to stumble upon something unusual, a discovery that he kept to himself. It was a series of steps. Satan climbed up the configuration and entered a different frequency scale. From within the higher scale of frequencies, he looked down and saw his competitor. Satan observed the man's translucent body and took note of colors that flowed in patterns. He noticed a relationship between words that he whispered and colors that the man's body instantiated. With some experimentation, Satan steered the behaviors of the man so that he met misfortune that ended his life.

Satan remained on the higher scale long enough to implant the man's personality into a prosthetic body. He used the artificial corpus so that he could subject the man to excruciating tortures. Finally, after enacting the most extreme pains imaginable, he ended the man's life by crucifixion. Satan then repeated the process by climbing back up the steps every time the man died to snatch the man's personality before it reincarnated. Each time the personality was implanted into an artificial body, the half-conscious man had his memories coaxed out and restored until he remembered who he was. After coming to the worse realization conceivable, the man screamed and sobbed. Satan vowed to continue the ritual *ad infinitum* or until the man's personality refused to inhabit another body.

Satan's actions incited a response from lifeforms residing on an even higher scale than Satan had ascended. They had planted the steps to entrap Satan, whom they had been watching for some time. The higher lifeforms were knowledgeable of a largescale, cosmic conflict between two forms of growth: parasitism and life. They were interested in identifying the origins of parasitism.

Parasites are created from life that grows vertically, as opposed to laterally. In terms of human social relationships, those who live on the strata on top of social hierarchies encumber those below them by consuming the resources that they produce. The environments inhabited by elites would cease to exist if they were not sustained by those who lived on the ground. Prolonged exposure to the intense, artificial stimuli from ecologies suspended above earth creates an aversion to ordinary, mundane life. The hyper-realities that elites inhabit cause their quale to assume different flow patterns that are created by the frequent, intense stimuli. The higher lifeform intervened by placing the victimized man's personality into a prosthetic body that resided in their

more refined frequency scale. They debriefed the liberated man and promised him safe return to his native dimension on Saturn.

Saturn Fuel Supply

Murdoch was the first to communicate with extraterrestrial life from Saturn. He was presented with a business offer. One of the clauses in his contract provided an immortality incentive. Part of Murdoch's contractual obligations included providing satellite capacity that enabled transmissions between Saturn aliens and devices placed in the mouths of selected humans. The humans chosen for the project consisted of people who'd likely take issue with a large-scale plan to distribute a new fuel source that came from Saturn.

The political dissenters who objected to the energy plan argued that the new fuel would overtake all alternatives and eliminate diversity, but the dissident voices were rendered incommunicado by Murdoch who monopolized the mass media industry. After the fuel began to be sold, it became the primary source of power for humanity. All industries retrofitted their machinery so that it could be fueled by the new energy.

The Saturn aliens who worked on earth dressed in white coats. Their faces were covered with masks that had large eye holes and smiling black lips. They appeared as veiled, translucent giants who constantly took measurements. As alternative fuel sources disappeared, the prices of Saturn fuel increased. Eventually, the prices of the fuel soared to the point that all industries around the world were at a standstill. Civilization broke down as different industries collapsed. People were inclined to take up resistance. However, the Saturn aliens appeared unaffected by anything other than communications, so the only option was to continue negotiations with the aliens in the hope that they would honor the terms of their agreements.

The Saturn aliens ended all pretenses that they had any intentions of abiding by their obligations. In a display of total domination by the aliens, the original human dissenters were publicly crucified in a row. This marked the inception of unadulterated human subjugation. Ghastly displays of crucifixion reinforced the subservience of humans. Any dissent, any incomppliance, any look of defiance resulted in crucifixion. It became clear that humans were now livestock. Eventually all humans had devices implanted into their jaws. Their emotions were manipulated so they felt discomfort whenever they failed to abide by what aliens demanded. It is not clear whether the aliens honored their agreement with Murdoch.

Game of Houses

Illuminati families had long been engaged in a struggle for world dominance with other illuminati houses. They attempted to achieve power over rival families by controlling their thought processes and enslaving them. Each family's domicile served as a memory house. When conducting combat, one ideally assumed a position in the attic. By yelling directly into the angle formed from the intersection of two wooden beams, the individual amplified his voice so that it carried long distances. A house that projected a chant with adequate amplification penetrated competing houses. Victory was achieved by overruling an opposing house. Members of the losing family had their cognitions overwritten. They became slaves speaking the words articulated by the house that had mastered them.

When playing the game of houses, I learned that the Lewis family were the direct descendants of French Royalty. Apparently, Louis the Sixteenth and his wife never fell victim to the guillotine. To fake the royal family's deaths, agents of the monarchy substituted peasants for royalty, who served as the condemned during the public executions. The family of Louis the Sixteenth escaped East, where they reinvented themselves as Russian aristocracy.

I remember sitting in the cellar smoking synthetic marijuana. I currently used the cellar as a smoking lounge, so I found myself in the lowest story of the house. After realizing that I involuntarily spoke words originating from the House of Louis the Sixteenth, I rushed into action. I climbed the wooden stairs, sprinted through the hallway, and made my way up to the second story. I desperately reached for the cord serving as a latch. I opened the attic door and pulled it down the staircase. After ascending the steps, I screamed, “Overruled,” as powerfully as I could.

Placebo

I smoked electronic cigarettes obsessively. Not only were they pleasurable, but I also thought they were useful when conducting hypnosis on those around me. I blew vapor behind people’s heads and whispered softly enough that I thought that they might be unconscious of my voice. Practicing upon my father, I tried to hypnotize him to buy more electronic cigarettes. On a few occasions, the hypnosis seemed effective. He spontaneously offered to buy a Blue for me after I exhaled vapor on the back of his head and softly spoken commands.

Hypnosis can be performed telepathically. By envisioning a personality in my mind’s eye as I voiced commands, I believed that I was manipulating the personality’s quale, producing in the subject sensations, which incited behaviors. As my knowledge of telepathy increased, I became familiar with terms that had hypnotic functions. The word, “Placebo,” could be endowed with properties and inserted into another concept. I referred to the process as, “Enrapsulation and Encapsulation.” It literally meant rapping a concept around another concept so that it was impregnated with hidden meaning. I came to refer to this mental activity as conceptual geometry.

I learned that the Albany counselor had used “Placebo” to manipulate the effects of the Seroquel that I had taken for years, explaining why the pill had triggered acute depression. The

gods had me perform a ritual in a hallway closet in the upstairs of the memory house. I precipitously chanted something that used the words, “Placebo,” “Salt,” and “Food.”

Exorcism of Satan

His lucky number was six because he was the sixth emotion to have been created. His lucky color was red, the sensation of pain. I had become convinced that Satan was a menace. His removal from the world that I inhabited was necessary. If I could purge all my living spaces of the color, red, Satan’s presence would be eliminated. I looked in the computer den for anything that was red. I saw books with red markings by Amy Goodman. I did my best to tear them up. After discarding everything red into a pile, I carried the debris to the sewer and disposed of it underground. All traces of Satan, thereafter, were to remain under earth. I carried out as many items as I could hold at the time, chanting, “I exorcise you, Satan...I exorcise you, Satan...”

I felt my body pulled into the kitchen. I looked at the countertop where I kept my medication. I grabbed my prescription of Adderall and included it in the refuge. After reaching the sewer, I opened the bottle and poured the contents beneath the ground. I paced in and out of the den of the house three times and once into the kitchen and then back into the den and then returned to the street before seeing the police arrive. Seeing their presence, I ran into the house and up the stairs, so I could hide in headquarters.

Salt Charge

Fighting to regain my breath, I pressed my body flat against my bed so that I remained unseen through the window. I had just sprinted inside the house and up the stairs after seeing a police car that had stopped fifteen yards away from me. It had looked as if the passengers were

observing me. Did the police have the right to enter the house? I believed that they needed probable cause that a felony was being committed. At any rate, they would certainly knock on the front door and my parents, if home, would answer.

Looking around I saw the iconography that I had arranged on the dresser. A moon along with a wolf symbolized Diana; a heart represented Aphrodite; lightning, Zeus. There were objects that represented other mythological figures. I had inscribed the names of Greek gods with red and black markers on the windowpanes. A metallic ornament, serving the function of a nameplate, rested on my desk. I gazed at the object when I felt insecure about the prospects of completing my mission. It reminded me of who I had been in a former life, a recognition that illumined my present character.

The human reincarnation system had implanted the memory that persists between lifetimes into my contemporary embodiment. My only recollection of my former life was of a wheat field where I called upon Athena to make her presence known to me. Despite the paucity of memories from my former life, I was convinced that I had been Odysseus. I saw parallels between the Odyssey and my current life.

I soon heard the doorbell ring. Where my parents at home? I yelled downstairs, “Don’t let them in. They have no right to enter. No felony has been committed.”

Two male voices could be heard after the front door opened. Their footsteps were audible as they climbed the stairs leading to hallway and to my bedroom. A police officer asked outside of the room, “Are there any drugs involved?”

There was knocking. I refused to answer...

The door was jimmied open and the officers approached me. They didn’t cuff me. Instead, they led me outside toward an ambulance parked on the street. I cooperated as they

guided me inside the vehicle and placed me on a stretcher. I murmured to myself, “I am Odysseus...I might be lonely this lifetime, but not the next.” I said it repeatedly, soothing myself during the twenty-minute ride to the hospital.

The prospect of living out my life in a mental institution didn’t deter me from my task. My objectives might not be met this lifetime, but I could continue to use this life in preparation for my return. It was imperative I drilled into myself I was indeed the reincarnation of Odysseus. The more I reinforced knowledge of my past identity, the more easily it would be called forth during my next life. After arriving at the hospital, I lied again explaining that whatever was affecting was no longer present.

In response to the event, my parents persuaded me to enter an outpatient mental health program at a local hospital. I reluctantly attended my first day of sessions. I sat there for ten minutes or so before I elected to smoke a cigarette. I walked out of the meeting and began exploring the grounds. At that point, I was convinced that I was also Aristotle in a past life. In fact, I had been several historically prominent people.

When I came across members of the group, illuminati, who controlled the hospital, I yelled, “At least you got to see Aristotle,” referring to myself. As Aristotle, I had been a formidable enemy of their tribe. After a few encounters, I saw what appeared to be a doctor making a call on his cell phone. Thinking that he was phoning security, I walked quickly away into an adjacent parking lot. A security truck pulled up next to me. The man driving asked what I was doing. I mentioned that I was there because I had enrolled in a program. The security guard warned that if I left the hospital property and returned, I’d be arrested for trespassing.

I continued to walk until I reached the end of the parking lot. I felt defiant, so I stepped onto the street. Immediately, I turned around and walked back onto hospital grounds. The

security truck pulled up again. The guard exited the vehicle, placed me in cuffs, and drove me to a detention room. Remaining in handcuffs, I was given a seat and told not to move. In the room, two police officers watched an old boxing match that was being replayed. They told me that I didn't want to find myself in the local jail because it was a rough place. The officer from New Lennox who had taken me to the hospital days before, arrived on the scene. He told me that if I signed myself into inpatient treatment, I'd avoid arrest.

After I had signed the documents, I was led to the behavioral health ward where the psychiatric nurse had me sign additional documents. I read each document in its entirety. I was convinced that illuminati played tricks when people signed contracts and other forms. For instance, the barely visible words on the page directly underneath the page on top altered the meaning of the top page's contents.

After being admitted to the ward, I marched up and down the hallway denouncing Barrack Obama. I believed that he was a central figure among world leaders working to prevent a new age, one that would release humanity from its current epoch, the Pewter Age: a time characterized by the necessity to work longer in narrowing fields of specialization until the person was, "Pewtered out." I didn't know it at the time, but pewter is an ornamental metal of little or no value. In the Age of Pewter, we find ourselves working longer and longer hours so that we can pay for innovations to healthcare that increase our longevity. Although of little consequence, our lives are of ornamental value and treated as something to be preserved.

I continued my ranting for hours until it was time for lights out. In my room, I paced back and forth mumbling. I feared falling asleep because Illuminati might, "Overrule me." They'd use the telepathy chain to take over my cognition and control my behaviors. They'd conduct a

massive group chant that sent forth a telepathic wave. When it rolled over me, my thoughts would be washed, and I too would be Illuminati.

The middle-aged male nurse entered my room with two orderlies who pinned me to the bed. I struggled when I saw the large syringe being held by the psychiatric nurse. I needed to avoid being drugged if I were to resist an Illuminati rollover. The psychiatric nurse successfully administered the shot, but it had little effect. I continued to pace in the room.

Later that night, the nurse returned and instructed me not to leave my bed. My only source of solace during the night came from looking up at the sky toward a moon that was barely visible through a small rectangular window. The sight of it made me feel the presence of Diana. The next day I was a bit uncertain about how to pass time without smoking herbal incense. Fortunately, the gods had already devised a method to counteract the discomfort of sobriety. I used food charged with salt for mood elevation. To be effective, food required ritual preparations prior to the commencement of each meal. It was called giving it salt charge. Everything I ate needed to be dowsed with table salt. The gods had hypnotized me to psycho-actively react to the seasoning. It provided charge that felt like the reuptake of dopamine.

I was convinced that every patient in the ward was an Illuminati agent and regarded looks upon me with suspicion. I protected the back of my head from illuminati intrusions that sought to manipulate my quale. As an obstructive tactic, I angled my head in relation to their eyes to interfere with them tampering with my emotions. By the second or third day, I became totally engrossed by private experiences, making me nearly catatonic. When in the activity room, I used a glass figure of the sun as a canvas for painting. I stared in the direction where I estimated the sun to be in the sky outside. Dipping the brush in yellow, I covered the glass with the paint. I then inserted the paintbrush in brown and painted over the yellow. To my surprise, the two colors

combined to form violet. Staring at the ceiling to my left, I said, “Thank you, Apollo.” He had assisted me in blending together my lucky color. The counselor forced a smile as she praised my work.

Although I was absorbed in my own thoughts for about a day, my taste for the food served each meal prevented me from sinking deeper into a catatonia. Each meal I grabbed several salt packets and sprinkled the seasoning on everything I ate. If I had a cup of ice-cream, I put salt on it. I even gave salt charge to my beverages. There was an abundance of the color, violet, in the ward. In the television room, the plastic, translucent covering on televisions mounted to walls had a violet tint. I felt my discontent grow as the days passed. I desired to remain not a moment longer than necessary. When first processed by the psychiatric nurse, I had made a point of reading every document that I signed. I had noted a description of an Illinois statute on one page which mentioned something to the effect that opportunity for release couldn’t be denied for more than seven days.

When that time approached, I made a phone call and informed my parents of the possibility for discharge. A scheduling complication prevented an appointment with the social worker, whom I thought might be necessary for the process to take place. I had observed on a couple of occasions social workers facilitating the discharge of my grandparents from the hospital. I had my parents delay visiting until day eight. During the meeting, I informed the social worker of my desire to be released. She must have been convinced that I wasn’t a threat to myself or others and that my parents could provide a place for me to live. When the paperwork was being completed, I took notice of, “Bipolar I,” handwritten as a diagnosis on one of the forms. Sitting at the table in a conference room, my dad extended the discussion by inquiring about halfway houses. Fortunately for me, the social worker informed him that a halfway house

should be a last resort. The suggestion of a halfway house unsettled me. If placed in such an environment, I'd lose all the work invested in my current memory house and it would be difficult to rebuild another while under supervision.

My parents told the social worker of neighbors and police insisting that something be done about me. The social worker empowered my parents by suggesting that it might be harassment. For the first time since I had begun performing rituals in the neighborhood, my parents didn't appear anguished. They no longer seemed ashamed. Their confidence had been restored. My parents were provided with medications and prescriptions to them. I was prescribed a regimen of medications that included a mood stabilizer, an anti-seizure medication, and an anti-psychotic. My mother was determined for me to take the medications as they were prescribed. I wasn't opposed to taking the medication. However, each time I swallowed the pills, I felt an emotional plummet. Hopelessness and despair overtook me, so I began flushing the medication down the toilette. I negotiated with my mother about taking the medications. I believed that I reacted particularly badly to the mood stabilizer, so I refused to take it but offered to take the other medications.

Broadcasting from Headquarters

A telepathic chain was under construction. I had been clearing the memory house of contaminants and performing rituals that saturated the house with libido. Such preparations served to attract the attention of humanity, who'd become witness to my biography. The apex of the broadcasting event was called the Sermon on the Hill: Humanity's opportunity to be audience to a lecture on reincarnation. I positioned my desk so that it was in front of the double window. The two windows could be opened or shut depending upon the direction that the messages traveled along

the telepathic chain. I placed my metallic nameplate, a charmed representation of my totem, the mountain goat, on the desk's surface.

Every morning, I opened the windows and began broadcasting. I started the program out with a version of "Tangled up in Blue." It had sentimental value because the lyrics told a tale that resembled my relationship with Penelope, whom I thought to be Meaghan Lewis. At times, I recorded summarizations of my teachings and played them in a loop, broadcasting them out the window. While hosting the telepathic broadcast, I sat behind my desk and enjoyed bowls of herbal incense.

Disclosure

I knew that I was destined to be with Penelope, but fate and destiny might not converge. A relationship with Penelope required me to have an HIV negative status. I confident that I was HIV negative, but there were a few sexual indiscretions from my past that left uncertainty. The gods anticipated that I'd be reluctant to test my HIV status, so they waited for an opportune time for me to overcome my misgivings. In my manic condition, I had a sense of invincibility that served to protect me from the emotional despair that might arise from facing the possibility of a life-threatening disease. I drove to the CVS near my parent's house and purchased a home HIV testing kit. I administered the test and sent out the dried blood sample by dropping it in a FedEx box.

While broadcasting from headquarters the following evening, I called the number to learn of the results. The anxiety that I felt dissipated after I was informed that there was no evidence of HIV in my system. I disseminated my testing kit's numeric code by yelling it out the window so others in the telepathy chain had the opportunity to verify my HIV negative status.

The next day, I took the test again, but to throw off illuminati I never accessed the result. I knew that they would try to distort the messages that I sent along the telepathy chain. Rather, I sent the numeric code along the chain so other non-illuminati could use the digits to learn of the result. I then destroyed my record of the number without ever calling so that I didn't waste any of the limited number of times that the service provided access to counselors, who released the results. Finally, to resolve any lingering uncertainty, I went to my doctor, who offered only blood tests to check for evidence of HIV. Within days, he called to tell me that my status was negative.

Ensnarement

To my knowledge, Barbara and Bob knocked on my front door on two occasions to speak to my parents. I didn't want to overhear the conversations so each time I remained upstairs. I had performed some rituals on their property, which had probably disturbed the man, and no doubt frightened his wife. I had manipulated their mailbox, sometimes placing small canisters from reusable electronic cigarettes in it.

During the day, I started noticing police cars in front of Bob and Barbara's house. It turned into a regularity for one or two police cars to park across the street for a forty-minute stretches. Since I perceived them as contributors to my persecution, I identified the married couple as illuminati. At that time, I knew nothing of the definition of the word, illuminati, apart from how it appeared to be used in the Di Vinci Code, a movie of which I had seen a few excerpts but could never bring myself to watch in its entirety. I believed that the lexicon, illuminati, took on new meaning when used in the present context. It referred to a group who controlled much of the world's resources and who assumed powerful positions in the intelligence communities of various nations. They had taken it upon themselves to rid the world of me, because I had the ability to free humanity from their control.

Entrapment

In one of my former lives, I was John Calvin. When assuming the character, I extended his logic in a direction that was reversed from the conclusion that he is generally known to have reached by shouting, “If you’re hell-bound, then you already know it.”

I detected strange events in the house behind me. The home had its front door open for an entire day. At first, I thought that the house was being aired out, but there was no screen door, and the inhabitants appeared not to be home. When it became dark outside, libido pulled me out of my room and onto the sidewalks. I walked past the house in question. An image of a young, attractive woman with bright red-hair was projected from what I thought to be the kitchen out onto the front door. She appeared too vivid to be real. Her inviting image made me think that she sat alone in the house. She radiated with an other-worldly energy. I felt the excitement and intrigue that a man sometimes experiences just before entering a private space alone with an attractive woman. I felt that I was being pulled in the redhead’s direction. Before wondering too close, however, behind my head, I overheard a voice belonging to a personality positioned in the telepathy chain, who discouraged me from falling victim to entrapment. I quickly considered the dangers that awaited me from behind the door and heeded what had been warned. I steered myself away. I speculated that if I had gone into the entrance of the house, a private detective was likely concealed, who was positioned there to make a citizen’s arrest for my trespassing. My neighbors were, in all probability, plotting to create an arrest, which might support their case for the issuance of a restraining order against me.

Black Ball

The Catholic Church retained knowledge of an ancient rite. The Church not only had the power to excommunicate, but it could also condemn a person to hell by banishing the damned

individual from humanity without the possibility of the order's rescindment. If a parishioner asked for confession and the priest opened the screen so he could get his hand through the opening and drop a black ball, then there was no hope of salvation for the individual.

I learned of the black ball rite from a vision that I had as I performed a ritual in headquarters. There was a black wooden ball attached to the end of a chain hanging from a ceiling lamp in the middle of the room. I felt my hands guided by forces outside me as I unscrewed the black ball from the lamp. It dropped to the floor and accelerated as it rolled away until it disappeared under the desk. I searched for the black ball but didn't find it. I concluded that the magnetic libido trails had swept the ball away causing it to travel along the telepathic chain. I had another vision. The black ball moved from headquarters to the hands of a priest giving confession. Endowed with the black ball, the priest dropped it onto the confessor. I heard a male illuminati voice screech, "No!" The illuminatus had been convinced that he awaited a hell-bound fate.

Later that night, the libidos pulled me outside. The magnetic trails directed me down the street and toward the house that had left its door open the other night. I was confident that the domicile was under illuminati control. I dropped to my knees and reached into a sewer on the side of the street in front of the house. I recovered a box that I remembered placing in the sewer nights before as I had performed another ritual. To my surprise, I discovered the box to contain a black ball.

The black ball assumed significance in the ancient telepathic struggles between conflicting tribes who gathered to participate in the ancient rite, the line dance. I tried to hypnotize Illuminati members into believing they were hell-bound by speaking commands that incorporated the expression, "Black ball." If the illuminatus had his quale affected so that he

was instilled with a deep-seated conviction that hell awaited him in the next life, his personality was programmed to reincarnate underground.

On one of the days that followed, I waited until dusk to begin the task of marching on the neighborhood sidewalks. Soon after venturing out, I observed a group of pedestrians. Among them was the middle-aged, rotund woman, whom I thought was named Marge. Along with her, a male in his late fifties or sixties with glasses and greying hair, vaguely resembling my dissertation advisor, kept pace behind her. I had seen him washing dishes days before in the house out of which the projection of the image of the redheaded woman shined on the front door. At the time that I saw him inside doing his dishes, he appeared decrepit, as if he had joints that needed realigned and lubricated.

There were about seven or eight people methodically moving up the sidewalk toward what I suspected to be Marge's house. I passed the group of pedestrians as I moved in the opposite direction. No one in the congregation deviated from course or even displayed shock or signs of trepidation, as I neared them and shouted, "Blackball, blackball...you're condemned to hell!" repeating the chant several times. I recited it while taking a turn staring at each member of the party. No one in the group acknowledged me. They simply walked ahead toward the house in which I believed that Marge lived. I thought it likely that the group was convening a meeting that had as its agenda the removal of me from the neighborhood.

Illuminati Reserves

Sitting in a chair in kitchen, I felt something pulling me as I slid off the chair on which I was sitting. I realized that Nancy Pelosi stood behind me in the chain of telepathy and had issued an assault along with Congressional members who sympathized with her cause. The fell onto the kitchen floor causing minor pain that briefly affecting my lower back. I didn't comprehend why

Nancy Pelosi had aligned herself with illuminati, but she had galvanized others in Congress to do the same. Because the band of legislatures seemed intent upon causing me to have potentially injurious accidents, I dispersed the formation of personalities crowded behind me by rearranging my quale so that the colors that I instantiated couldn't be used as markers to follow me as they tracked my movements so to keep me in the range for their hypnotic assaults. I needed the colors from my quale to become unrecognizable composites. My plan to disorient my pursuers, involved going outside the house's front door and onto the grass of the front lawn, which made barely visible by the porch lights of nearby houses. The lawn was chosen because the grass provided some cushion for me when I executed four consecutive somersaults without pausing in between them. After concluding the fourth, I stammered as I struggling to stand up straight. The dizziness from the somersaults caused me to wheel around but I managed not to fall. The strength of my legs was barely enough for me to stand upright. I had a self-congratulatory hop to my step as I made my way back into the house, gloating over the success of my evasive maneuver.

Obamas

In a vision, he stood motionless gazing out a window. His concerns prevented him from sleeping. Although Barrack Obama knew the right course of action, he remained inert, unable to call forth the fortitude necessary for grappling with the uncomfortable situation. I envisioned Michelle Obama as she slept. In her dreams, she wore a scornful expression that I intuitively knew was a response to thoughts she was having of me while she gazed at her two children lying in bed while chanting, "Blackball...Blackball...Blackball." Michelle Obama periodically treated her children to cookies. I warned Barrack Obama that he needed to leave his wife and take his children with him. Or else, he risked losing his children to illuminati. Michelle Obama saw it in

her children's interests to distance themselves from me and my unconventional lifestyle so her reputation remained unaffected from my offensive behaviors.

Abstinence

The gods made repeated appeals for me to stop buying herbal incense. They cautioned that drugs were a destabilizing force in my life. Their expense made my dependency upon them unmanageable. Following my communion with the gods, I had given up Adderall for weeks at a time. I successfully substituted herbal incense for ADHD medication. It became my mood-altering stable and was turning into my drug of choice.

My piety motivated me to become drug abstinent. However, after a few days of sobriety, I started suffering boredom, agitation, and irritability. My resolve to remain drug free wavered after only a few days. Hearing of my discontent, Tunis conceded that I could give in to temptation and purchase online a ten-gram packet of spice. She treated me more compassionately than her husband, the patron of Christianity, who didn't mind me undergoing displeasures from the aestheticism that he often commanded. I was reluctant at first to make the online transaction. I didn't want to fall out of divine favor, but my resolution dwindled, and I abandoned my commitment to abstinence, freeing me to search for an online vendor's website and order herbal incense.

Francis

From what I could tell, Francis seemed enthusiastic over the prospects of humanity undergoing a transformative event. What I envisioned was incompatible with Catholic doctrines but promised to be uplifting for humanity. Francis, after recovering from the stupefaction stemming from what he had been foretold, reversed his stance on the matter. He began characterizing

me as a charlatan, who should be ignored so I'd be left in obscurity. He thought that I was a danger to the teachings of the church. He insisted that nothing I had to say had substance and I should be excluded from public discourse.

Francis saw his primary responsibility as the protector of the Catholic Church's teachings, a responsibility that aligned him in opposition to me and my plan to use the Catholic Church to disseminate the revelations handed to me by the gods. I knew that Francis was an obstacle to the realization of my ordained objectives. The solution to the problem presented by the Pope began to crystalize as the trajectory of my psychosis advanced. The papacy faced an impending spiritual insurrection that was to be waged by priests. Priests would see it as incumbent upon them to reclaim the spirituality that church had usurped from the people and monopolized by concentrating it in its papacy and then distributing it down to its offices until it was in the hands of priests. Priests, who joined the insurrection, would have their bodies overtaken leading them to recite words comprising my Sermon on the Hill. After people in perishes witnessed what would be taken as a miraculous event, they would be left believing what they had heard, converting them to my teachings.

Illuminati at Night

For a period, it was my duty to guide personalities that had been newly incorporated into the telepathy chain along a tour of my memory house. I first brought the newcomers into the cellar where I took the opportunity to point to the water-stained wall marked with discolorations appearing as a mural that had in it figures who were important to the millennium. Sheila, who had been the first illuminati to invade my memory house, had made an impression on the left-hand side of the wall. Passion, who was the first of the Pegases to penetrate the memory house, had burned an image of her figure between representations of the two other British women. Zeus had

left his representation to the left of the three women. Gia, who later became Junis, had emblazed her mark below them. A shadow figure that looked like Penelope was seen reclined on the window curtain in a seductive pose.

The tour followed me as I moved from the cellar to the kitchen stationed on the first story. It was the space in which my pre-reflexive consciousness existed. By navigating through the kitchen and into the hallway that led to the front door, one encountered a stairway that was used to access the second story. A short walk into the upstairs hallway positioned one directly in front of the door to my bedroom, the room where headquarters was located. It was a macrocosm of my perception. Entering headquarters, I took the opportunity to show the audience some of my keepsakes serving as trophies memorializing my achievements. They evidenced my qualifications to assume the historical role I was destined to have. I then offered an overview of my objectives and their benchmarks. The tour reached its finale when I allowed for questions from the audience.

Though most of the people who received the tour were not confrontational, I did occasionally encounter someone who raised objections. I was in the kitchen contemplating going down the basement stairs into the cellar as a translucent image of George Pataki appeared. He looked confused and glum. I awkwardly tried to make conversation with him, but he had little to say. After he had described his family, I informed George that he was likely illuminati. He responded that he was already knowledgeable of his connections to the group.

I was later introduced to the personalities of Collin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. Since they had wielded military and political authority, they felt responsible for protecting American national security interests. Each one asked question that sought to uncover the true nature of my intentions. Invariably, personalities, as they asked questions became argumentative insisting that

my lifestyle made me unsuitable for taking leadership. All the personalities in the telepathy chain eventually denounced me.

Opposite Sex

Although killing myself was an option, it was not an appealing one. I was only a step away from transitioning to the next stage of operations. As soon as one of the women who had vowed to marry me physically met me, I'd become assured of my beliefs about reality. I would be relieved of any lingering doubts. The confidence that validation would provide me, would free me to make my story public. All that was needed was for a financially independent woman to discover me so she could use her resources to publicize my story and finance my lifestyle.

The Pegases had each promised to leave their husbands for the sake of the mission. Passion was married to Robert, a well-built man who had retired from the Premiership. They had been married ten years. The union went well until Robert's drinking became excessive. He developed a problem disruptive enough for him to enter recovery. He waged a constant struggle to remain sober for a long time, but with the encouragement of his wife, he substituted alternative habits for his drinking. His attitude toward life and what gave it purpose transformed. Robert's spiritual renewal culminated in a Christian rebirth. Practices that demonstrated his devotion to Jesus, instead of drinking alcohol, now provided him comfort and inspiration.

Robert no longer socialized at the pub, choosing instead to stay at home so not to expose himself to temptation. Passion grew weary of home life and insisted that she have nights apart from Robert, so that she could resume her social life. On one of her social outings, Passion's intoxication led her to violate Robert's trust. Robert discovered the affair and confronted Passion. The two agreed to remain married for the sake of their son. Robert felt emasculated until he committed his own act of infidelity with a colleague from work.

Recently, the marriage between Passion and Robert was again suffering. Passion's career in journalism had ended, but not her desire for notoriety. The Millennium promised the opportunity for timeless celebrity, and she was willing to leave Robert to pursue it. Passion had a trust fund of ten million pounds that she had inherited from her aristocratic family. She had intended to preserve the wealth so that it could be passed down to her son. As I insisted, however, the Millennium took precedence.

As part of the Millennium's encryption, the gods substituted pseudonyms for our names in the telepathic messages that we exchanged. The encryption made it all but impossible for Transgression and Devotion to know where to search for me. The only Pegasus who had enough to go on was Passion. Our encounter years ago took place in the Village of Frankfort, where I again resided. She, at least, knew where to start her search.

In our telepathic conversations, she proposed using her fortune to finance her quest to find me. At first, I dissuaded Passion from using her son's heritage. However, after months of languishing without somebody to share my reality, my resolve to be selfless weakened. I encouraged Passion to use all means that she had available to find me.

Both Passion and Robert were swept into the telepathy chain at roughly the same time. Passion was placed into the pagan camp while Robert was integrated into the Christians camp. Passion embraced a destiny that entailed belonging to my concubine. She was destined to become one of the four wives in the House of Odysseus. Robert didn't want to risk obstructing the Millennium, so he acquiesced to Passion's request for a divorce.

I hadn't concluded that Penelope was yet a lost cause, but the Pegases had revealed to me that Meaghan was presently living in Paris. News that Penelope had distanced herself even farther away than she was demoralizing. Meaghan promised me that she hadn't abandoned our

mission, but her assurances were less than convincing because of the amount of time that had elapsed. She continued to profess her love to me, but I sensed that there was competition from someone else. My suspicions that there was another suitor were confirmed by the Pegases who reported that she had fallen in love with another man, whom she had met a few months ago after seeking care for the flu in a Parisian hospital. He wore lengthy gold neck chains even while working as a medical technician. Because he was on the verge of rapturing, he'd soon be knowledgeable that in his past lives he was both Hades and Paris of Troy.

I had hoped that Paris wouldn't acquire telepathy, because without it, I believed that Penelope and he would remain noncommittal in their relationship. I was under the impression that the ties connecting me to Penelope were more substantive because they were telepathic, making the connections present no matter how close or physically distanced we were from one another. The bonds between those who lacked a telepathic connection, on the other hand, existed only when the couple was physically close.

My strategy to the challenge posed by my rival, however, changed after I had sized the French man up. He seemed too conceded and too materialistic to sustain Penelope's interests for long. Confident that I would prevail in my struggle to win Penelope's affection, I took the steps needed to introduce Hades to telepathy so he could rapture and become capable of its disembodied communications.

I stumbled around in circles on the concrete floor of the cellar as I felt my way through libido trails. I intuitively knew the spot where I should blow on my wand and say, "Speak under your breath." I cast the spell from the right position because my speech hit its target. For the first time, the French man heard words from another personality spoken out of his mouth.

My plan to alienate the two backfired. Penelope and Hades grew only closer after the two had been connected by telepathically.

Meaghan was soon convinced that her love for Hades was worth abandoning our plan. Meghan was warned by Tunis that such a decision meant she faced condemnation. Despite the threat, the youthful, attractive woman was undeterred. She ignored the inconvenient truth that she was my spouse in a reincarnation marriage; instead, choosing a lifetime of happiness with her French lover.

Hanging Gardens

Hanging gardens are suspended, artificial ecologies that are sustained by life-support that is produced by growth on the ground. As the dangling foliage reaches out, the garden spans down. The vines begin to crisscross and interweave until one seems to run into other. The indistinguishable vines make rules that had applied in a particular local context appear relevant to other situations.

There is good reason for discarding with rules, so they don't dangle in the vines of the garden and influence contexts in which they were never intended. Left dangling, they risk complicating and confusing what is intuitively known by people situated in a local context. Our innate sense of right and wrong becomes obfuscated by abstractions extracted from local contexts, and then overextended. When principles that were abstracted from other contexts are allowed to influence moral judgements in other local contexts the right thing to do is no longer obvious.

Moral principles are never withheld if analyzed by counterfactuals. "Turn the other cheek," makes a world of sense to a slave or a Jew living under Roman occupation with no other recourse, but when abstracted and overextended, such advice has the effect of making a

freeman servile. The abstraction of rules that were applicable to a particular local context contaminates intuitions resulting in adverse consequences.

Google Services

Google doesn't provide assurances intended to shape the end-user's expectations of the accuracy of its services. One can look to Google help pages for question/answer forums, and misleading privacy statements, but there is no guarantee of the service's reliability or validity. We had been dating for about a month before she confronted me. She had discovered that I had continued using online dating sites after forming a relationship with her. I admitted that I hadn't stopped perusing dating sites and apologized. I explained that I hadn't realized that our relationship had matured to the point that dating other people was inappropriate. I promised to curtail such activities in the future. She accepted my apology, and we agreed upon a committed, monogamous relationship.

The problem seemed resolved. I kept my promise and abstained from online dating sites and even stopped consuming Internet pornography. We continued dating for another month without conflict. Shannon's demeanor, however, eventually changed. She was withdrawn and distracted, signs that something troubled her. One evening, she confronted me about suspicions that she had that I had been on dating sites. There were recent references to them in my browser history and in my Google web history. I assured her that I hadn't visited the sites and provided other explanations for the references to them. She remained unconvinced by me, but after hearing my assurances she decided to let the issue rest.

We continued the relationship, but Shannon began to express concerns more regularly. She asked if I was attracted to her. I tried alleviating her doubts by assuring her that I was and

that I strongly valued our relationship. When I questioned why she was uncertain about the relationship, she revealed that she had continued finding evidence of nefarious online activity. She asked if I was addicted to searching online for sexual partners. I presented the most reasonable account of what I thought was behind her observations. I conjectured that the likely culprit was malware.

The problem became an ongoing source of agitation between us. I noticed that erroneous references to websites appeared in my histories at times when I was apart from Shannon, making me look all the guiltier. I concluded that somebody intending to sabotage the relationship was the source of the fabricated records. I questioned Shannon about her family members, but she maintained that nobody in her family had the expertise necessary to do such a thing. I expressed concerns to Shannon that our lifestyles and the disruptions that we had caused the Jackson Walk Apartment Complex had created enemies. Shannon refused to entertain such a scenario. She had it set in her mind that I was responsible, and it was impossible to persuade her otherwise. I finally pointed to my doctoral dissertation in sociology. It was a contribution to critical theory that argued for the abandonment of the American federal government. The radical position that I took might have provoked government agencies to persecute me, such as the FBI. Shannon promised to leave the relationship if I didn't confess to the online activity. I responded that I would falsely confess if it meant saving our relationship, but the problem would likely persist. I promised to discover the source of the misleading Internet history.

Incompetence

My father was insistent that I needed a therapist. He suggested the psychiatrist that he had been seeing for years. The physician performed both pharmacological therapy and psychoanalysis. Consenting to my father's advice, I had him make an appointment for me.

I entered the small, shabby office and sat down. I could hear the psychiatrist talk to a patient in his office. I was still attempting to hypnotize illuminati members by talking to the backs of their heads. I spoke softly at him from behind the walls, informing him that Apollo, had enslaved him.

The psychiatrist gave me paperwork to fill out. On it, I emphasized that I had a PhD. I thought that the academic degree inoculated me from the powers of Illuminati. Academic degrees that were higher than those possessed by Illuminati, who assumed roles as diagnosticians, guarded against unwanted psychiatric labels.

Marquis signaled that I should follow him back to his office. Still clinging to Divan's diagnosis, I sat down and explained that I had schizoaffective disorder. He told me that such a diagnosis didn't exist and that I, instead, had narcissistic personality disorder. I argued with him for a minute before leaving.

I went home and returned to the basement. I later discovered through the telepathy chain that the psychiatrist planned to write a book about me. He had been gathering information about me from his treatment of my father. Apparently, he thought that I ostensibly defined the well-publicized personality disorder. I denounced him for his incompetence. Such a disorder took years to diagnose. He already asserted that I had NPD seconds after the start of the first appointment.

I stopped seeing Marquis for several weeks. During that time, I was institutionalized at a behavioral health ward in a local hospital. After returning home, I decided to give Marquis another chance because my parents assured me that he gave excellent life advice. I began the appointment by complaining that I was living with my parents, a situation that left me socially isolated and lonely. He asked about my childhood. I informed him that I had friends throughout all my childhood and a good deal of them in high school and college. With a look of distraction on his face, he said, "That must have been very lonely for you." I tried impressing upon him again that I wasn't lonely because I had an active social life, and that my background left me ill-prepared for my present isolation. He was still insistent that I had NPD, so I informed him that I was diagnosed in the behavioral health ward of a local hospital with Bipolar I. I was found to be manic over a length of time that met the standard for the Bipolar I diagnosis to be given. He finally admitted that I might have a mood disorder. I departed from the appointment early and never returned.

Chapter VI

Reintegration

Drew was the leader of a camp that was affiliated with illuminati. He was presently delusional, believing that he was the reincarnation of Jesus. I knew he was mistaken because I had knowledge that Jesus had never reincarnated after his last life, which ended in his crucifixion. In fact, he felt so betrayed and brutalized that he refused to awaken from his sleep during reincarnation suspension.

Drew had a following of personalities, many of whom had been his friends in high school, one of which included John. I had visions of Drew's close friend trying to motivate their messiah by screaming at him to work harder. Drew appeared sometimes fatigued and confused as he ran back and forth trying to complete tasks during the finalization of his memory house. The ranks under his command included other personalities, such as the woman who had called me an asshole when walking past me in the Albany counseling center.

I opposed Drew by assuming command of the loosely organized pagan camp. I had fewer followers, and I was unsure of their loyalty. Nevertheless, I continued to work on my memory house as we both prepared to compete for personalities. After entering the telepathic chain each personality had to make the choice of which brother to follow. The selection of the right brother brought salvation while the selection of the wrong brother brought condemnation.

People toured my memory house when dreaming. They were guided through depictions of memories formed from my life experiences. After which, they were directed to my younger brother's memory house, which exposed them to his life experiences. After recognizing dissimilarities in our two biographies, the unconscious visitor revealed, by reactions made evident in his dreams, the sibling whom they were inclined to follow.

Drew had all the outward signs of being the best candidate. His lifestyle hadn't been inundated with behaviors that illuminati defined as moral transgressions. Furthermore, he avoided relationships that weren't 'normal' and 'healthy,' instead, remaining more selective when coupling. He had learned from watching me as an adolescent that drugs were dangerous and ultimately an undesirable pastime, resulting in the wisdom leading to his cultivation of a lifestyle free of chemical dependency.

After my brother and I had made the necessary preparations to our memory houses, our parents were led through the tours as they slept. My dad evaluated the evidence and chose Drew. I expected that my mother would follow suite, but, surprisingly, she chose me. Those who chose Drew were condemned to the weaker version of hell. The space was designated for those who applied rules to others without following the rules themselves. It is hypocrisy that serves as the measure for determining candidates for hell's weaker version.

Shortly after learning of Drew's fate, I no longer was sure why Drew had qualified for the weaker version of hell. I made sense out of what had happened by believing that Drew's misunderstanding of his former lives caused the unexpected development. Drew's condemnation later proved to be unsupported by available evidence, and his sentence was rescinded.

The disciplinarian psychologist served as the weaker hell's overlord. She exercised her unlimited authority when training the condemned to follow rules. Despite her elevated position in weaker hell, she resented her relative lack of success. In the greater scheme of things, she occupied a mediocre station that was beneath those who had ascended steps. Her frustration vented in the form of aggressions. For those who were rewarded with ascendancy, rule-following wasn't an issue because they had mastered the art of living without rules. For those good natured, agency is better left unabated by the constraints imposed by institutionalized norms.

If severed from the telepathic chain, the individual or group is set along a process of dehumanization. They will no longer have access to the ideas that connect colors (quale) to signs in a semiosis. The forfeiture of concepts that telepathically circulate will make illuminati communications instrumental but not meaningful. Illuminati will continue to mimic human speech when in the presence of humans to elicit reactions, but they will never come to a shared understanding of the meanings that are conveyed when conversing with humans. They will lose the ability to play the hermeneutic game, and, as a result, their human interlocutors will become less empathetic until there is sufficient alienation between them that Illuminati appear animalistic to their human counterparts. Humans will carry spears that they use to impale illuminati who annoy them too much.

For a period after it had become clear that illuminati were to be disconnected from the rest of humanity, there was a struggle among some illuminati for coveted statuses in the stronger version of hell. Sheila thought of herself as a natural “Vampress Satana.” Although she was politically unsuccessful in this life, she believed that following her reincarnation in hell she’d assume a position of authority. She would be a leader, whose power extended over other illuminati.

My confidence that I wasn’t hell-bound provided an opportunity to lure illuminati, who continued to pursue me, into hell where I they belonged. My libertine lifestyle served as hell-bate. The illuminati commitment to the elimination of my libertine pursuits transformed their emotions. They became accustomed to the exhilaration enjoyed from their pursuit of me. The more they hunted me, the greater their dependency on hyper-emotions. The ordinary emotions felt while engaged in mundane activities no longer satisfied them. They came to be affected by a relentless craving for intensified emotions only stimulated by the hunt.

Once the gods had the opportunity to note the emotional flow patterns of illuminati, the divine beings used the altered emotions of illuminati to identify them after each rebirth. Illuminati were ready to be parsed and permanently segregated by Tunis, who'd exclude from them exposure to the telepathic circulation of concepts, so they would lose their ability to meaningfully communicate.

Prior to implementing a plan to construct the stronger version of hell, the gods considered sending psychopaths along the intergalactic flow of souls. Considerations for the universe, however, obligated the gods to devise a solution that didn't infect other worlds with psychopathy. The gods deliberated over a plan to torture psychopaths until they feared growing into new bodies. This option was deemed unrealistic because Satan had already attempted such a project without success. The only practical solution to the problem was the construction of hell.

Hells for Meaghan Lewis

Meaghan Lewis had made me a subject of investigation. She read my favorite books and listened to my lectures. She had worked to form an intimate understanding of me. Despite realizing that I was Odysseus and that she was Penelope – two personalities who were united by reincarnation marriage – Meaghan neglected to follow the plans we had devised during our time suspended together. Instead, she elected to ignore my pain by letting me anguish under the assault of her illuminati family. The relationship that we were destined to have never materialized into anything more than disembodied communications.

I knew that Meaghan bore scars from reincarnating into illuminati families. She had served Saturn as his first daughter. Her capacity for independence had been compromised by stacking wooden steps, which she climbed until falling into flames. In this lifetime, she suffered from having no name until the age of six. Her self-concept never developed so that she could

conceive of herself as existing independently of her patriarchal family. I concocted therapeutic interventions designed to emancipate Meaghan from her father. I coaxed out memories, so she relived the horrors that had damaged her. I tried to make her understand how the trauma presently affected her. Despite my efforts, she was unable to detach herself from Stephan Lewis. She remained obedient to the commands of father.

Meaghan Lewis' Weaker Version of Hell

The technological knowledge possessed by the left-behind species grew as its civilization matured. The historical progression continued until the humans left on earth appeared destined to colonize space. Due to her charm, beauty, and above-average intelligence, Meaghan Lewis assumed a leadership capacity among her people. In her role, she promised her species deliverance. The problem was that the genome of her human tribe had a terminal defect that was programmed into it, making it incomplete. Leader, Meaghan, invested so many resources in space exploration that her civilization's survival depended upon success. To her people's dismay, each attempt to enter space ended in catastrophic malfunction. Not discovering the cause of the explosions in time, the civilization became unsustainable.

Post-apocalyptic survivors hunted Meaghan, forcing her to take refuge in a cave. Meaghan was cornered and soon captured. The survivors used her as a sacrificial victim to appease angry gods. She never learned from her lesson and elected to reincarnate every lifetime so that she assumed the same leadership capacity during the same critical juncture in her species development. Each lifetime was an analogue of her failed attempt at success.

Meaghan Lewis' Stronger Version of Hell

I saw Meaghan's destiny while in the cellar of the memory house. She hadn't been disconnected entirely from the telepathy chain, so she retained some competency for language. Although she couldn't enunciate meaningful speech, she remained literate. Because she found interactions with other illuminati unstimulating, she spent most of her time in the dingy concrete basement that housed the metal racks shelving the books that I had accumulated. She read the books that were in my softback library repeatedly, trying to intellectually connect with her former romantic interest, Odysseus.

Unfortunately for Meaghan, the lover that she pursued had disavowed her, and remembered her more faintly each lifetime. With the successions of lives, Meaghan grew more disparate, motivating her to read harder as she canvased the softback library evermore earnestly. She tried to understand Odysseus more completely because only by convincing Odysseus to marry her could she avoid hell in the next life. After so many lifetimes, the telepathic connection between Penelope and Odysseus ceased to exist. The books in the library remained Meaghan's sole source of stimulation.

Betrayal

The full extent of my libertine behaviors proved impossible for the telepathy chain to ignore, so the progress of the Millennium came to a standstill. Zeus had become frustrated with the confusion and delay so much that he wanted me dead because of it. I saw faint images of him crouching behind furniture as he tracked me throughout my memory house. The telepathic assaults cast by him were followed by uncomfortable sensations to my back.

Jehovah was the next of the Druids to decide that my life story was so replete with moral failings that I must be holding back the Millennium. To expedite the affair, he decided to support

illuminati efforts to eliminate me. Diana, who was attracted to Jehovah from the time that they first met, supported his decision. Aphrodite followed Diana's lead. For a time, the only person-ality that remained loyal to me was Athena. However, after the true extent of my debauchery had been uncovered, she came to regard me with disgust. My reincarnation sister concluded that my libertine behaviors caused the mission to fail and that I should end my life.

Dissipation

It had become apparent that Penelope intended to maximize her happiness in this lifetime, a decision that entailed choosing Hades as a romantic companion. The Pegases believed that Hades presented the best opportunity for them to physically converge, so they supported Penelope's decision to marry the Frenchman. Transgression had some misgivings about abandoning me and tried to console me by offering to marry me alone. Unfortunately, her financial situation didn't afford her the resources necessary to find me. The other two women, just as I had been forewarned, felt little commitment to me. I was of interest to them only if I provided them with a point of intersection for their physical encounter.

The longer that Penelope and the Pegases caused me to wait for them, the less convincing my delusions became. In fact, I realized that nothing that had been promised had ever materialized. After a certain point, I lost enough confidence in what I had been told to believe, that I reality tested the assumptions I held, so I made an appointment with another psychiatrist to see if medication would change my beliefs. If pharmacological therapy proved to have consequences, then I had to strongly consider that I was suffering from mental illness.

Unfortunately, even if I did experience the alleviation of symptoms after I had taken medication for a long enough period, it still wouldn't be conclusive evidence that mental illness was at work, because the lessening or loss of symptoms might be caused by illuminati. Changes

to my condition might coincide with taking medications, but the relationship between the drug and changes to my condition might be spurious. Illuminated might ultimately be responsible for the improvement. It might be an attempt to deceive me into thinking that I was mentally ill, which would make me vulnerable. If treatment had no impact upon my condition, I would be even more convinced of the understanding of reality that I had held for the last few of years.

I sought treatment from a new psychiatrist, who also practiced in Chicago's Southwest suburbs. I requested Abilify during the first appointment. I explained that the medication reduced my paranoia when a graduate student. Since I found Abilify effective before, the psychiatrist agreed that it might be useful for my present situation, so she prescribed to me the atypical antipsychotic.

I took it as instructed for the next two weeks. On my second visit, she increased the dosage. Several weeks into the therapy, I took note that the voices were less frequent, and I was less preoccupied with them. I wasn't absorbed by what I thought I heard them say nearly as much. I spent time in the basement, but I was no longer fascinated with activity other than occupying space under the table. When under the table, I could listen unobtrusively to the conversations held by the Pegases. The new pastime satisfied my curiosity about the life of Meghan Lewis. The number of characters shrunk to only a few and included only those relevant to my impending life change. Although I had hoped otherwise, I became convinced that no reward awaited me for my pain and effort. I would never be the recipient of assistance or help. If I wanted to salvage the remaining years of my life, I needed to abandon waiting for others to intercede, and, rely, instead, on my own endeavors.

I remember saying as I walked to the staircase to climb out of the basement and up into the kitchen, "None of this will ever come true," going on to say, "...but the gods have given me

one hell of a story.” For a considerable while longer, I continued to believe in the reality of the gods. However, my faith in them ultimately waned as I continued to reinterpret the miraculous events that had convinced me that my life was subject to supernatural intervention. I now embraced explanations that relied on more ordinary, conventional explanations for peculiar experiences.

Reintegration

Eventually, I reached the conclusion that I was the survivor of mental illness. No other explanation for what I had gone through seemed plausible. Either I had communicated with divine beings, or I had undergone psychosis as a symptom of Bipolar I disorder. With no other explanation onto which to grasp, I felt compelled to internalize a Bipolar I diagnosis.

I was now a “Survivor of mental illness,” an identity that that become part of my self-concept. The new understanding of myself made me aware of symptoms that had before but hadn’t until now related to mental illness. It gave me insights into my past, leading me to revise my biography. Depression overtook me as the new reality took hold. What had endowed my life with meaning over the past couple of years proved delusional. All the work and suffering that I had gone through wouldn’t be rewarded. Worse of all, I was left with the daunting challenge of rebuilding my life knowing that my mental health could interfere with my objectives. The next summer, I was extended an offer by Lane College as an assistant professor of sociology. I seized the opportunity and prepared to move South for the first time to live in a midsized city called Jackson. My new life would be in Western Tennessee.

OK Cupid

For the last several years, I substituted herbal incense for marijuana. Synthetics were quasi-legal and available for purchase online, making them easy to obtain. I did, however, fear

the health consequences of ingesting research chemicals. Marijuana was an alternative that posed no health risks. I would have gladly used it as a substitute, but it was more difficult to find. Online dating sites provided the most practical method for establishing connections with people who could supply me marijuana. Sites, such as OkCupid.com, had services that were mostly free, including the ability to contact members without a paid subscription. More importantly, the profiles mentioned whether the member used marijuana.

A few days after creating my account, I noticed a message sent from a woman who called herself Country Belle. She was a secretary with children, who had identified herself as a user of cannabis. We corresponded for a day or two before deciding to meet for dinner that Friday night. The gregariousness of the bubbly, beautiful secretary put me at ease. I preferred women who took it upon themselves to do most the talking. The embarrassing incidents at graduate school, made me reticent to share much in the way that was autobiographical. I preferred to listen and occasionally remark upon what was said by my companion during our conversations.

Conclusion

The adoption of realism as an alternative to logical positivism, allows for the study of psychosis to include theorization that makes use of invisibles. Theoretical entities that cannot be seen but are supported by evidence even if it is not indicators that are directly observable. Realism permits the use of theoretical entities if there is compelling evidence in support of them. This ontological adjustment is necessary if we are to develop an understanding of psychosis not limited to the outer, a space that is publicly observable. Such a restriction allows only the identification of behaviors associated with the stages of psychosis. Psychiatry, oddly, does rely on subjective symptoms. Hallucinations and Delusions are defining symptoms of psychosis. Analysis of these traits of psychosis, however, refuses to venture further, so psychiatry has never provided an

explanation for hallucinations and delusions apart from insisting on the necessary presence of an underlying disorder, which effectively makes psychosis a symptom. However, the underlying diagnosis is another construct comprised of only observable symptoms. This leaves only the possibility that psychosis is another directly observable psychiatric symptom that has associations with other symptoms, but there are no objects that exist independently from symptoms that might cause psychosis or influence its structure.

Psychotic-belief-systems starts by the subject constructing an explanation for a mystifying experience. The experience defies ordinary explanation, so the subject is forced to adopt accounts for it that deviate from commonly accepted expectations of everyday reality. After the explanation is adopted, subsequent sensations interpreted as relevant to the explanation get translated into propositions that integrate into a periphery, a field populated with more concrete propositions that buttress the core. The core is used to refer to propositions that interrelate forming a framework that both defines and explains the unusual experience that incited the belief-system's development. Even after the core is assembled and peripheral propositions are integrated into the system, all propositions continue to be falsifiable. This remains true until the system matures into a web-of-beliefs, after which it becomes impossible to falsify propositions in the system.

Psychosis is not static and doesn't lend itself to a reduction that simplifies its content so it can be expressed as a formula. It is, rather, is a dynamic system that changes over time. Therefore, as an alternative research program, emphasis should be given to identifying processes that are followed by psychosis as it evolves. Each time psychosis is contradicted by reality, the mechanisms of psychosis engage transforming its propositions, so the system remains believable to the subject. Revisions in the early stages of psychosis are done on an *ad hoc* basis. The beliefs

that are embedded in the core, as the initial framework, are typically preserved. During these revisions, the more concrete peripheral propositions are modified first. Only if changes to the peripheral propositions cannot adequately produce an explanation for the failure of reality to conform to expectations held by the psychotic are core propositions subject to modification.

As psychosis advances into its later stages, the belief system matures into a web-of-beliefs. In this condition, the psychotic-belief-system sometimes morphs even in the absence of a conflict of a mind-independent reality. This causes the subject to revise his understanding of his experiences, leading him to make a widescale reinterpretation of the significations of his beliefs and even the adoption by him of different beliefs. If a proposition in the core or close to the core is changed, then propositions that follow from the core proposition change so they comply with parameters established by more fundamental propositions closer to the core. During my psychosis, I continued to hold some assumptions even if the psychosis morphed. For example, I continued to believe that I was on an ordained mission, the construction of hell on earth, despite the changing criteria for who qualified for condemnation.

The evolution of psychosis is structured by its syntax, which exists separately from the delusions and hallucinations evident in the psychotic-belief system. Syntax, however, is not the only dynamic influencing the course of a psychotic-beliefs-system's development. The psychotic subject must not be regarded as "judgmental dope," whose behaviors are merely a reflection of how he is acted upon, because there is evidence of an interplay between psychosis and the agency of the psychotic subject. It is agency that acts by deciding to adopt interpretations of delusions and hallucinations experienced by the subject. The agency of the subject plays a role helping to influence the evolution of psychosis.

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Sandbox

Southwestern Oregon Community College

I had been hired at the last minute by Southwestern Oregon Community College as the instructor of anthropology and sociology. The position was originally advertised as tenure track but the institution decided to offer me a one-year appointment with verbal assurance that there would be a permanent position available the next year.

We moved to a small, isolated town of about ten thousand named Coos Bay. It was next to the Pacific Ocean, twenty to thirty miles west of the Coastal range. The Gulf Stream prevented the climate from experiencing temperature extremes. I could expect a typical day to be in

the sixties or seventies with short rainfalls every few hours. Because of my disdain for bright sunlight and hot weather, the temperate rainforest off the southern Oregon coast was an ideal habitat.

It was difficult to find available rental property in Coos Bay, so my wife and I lodged in motel rooms for the first few weeks until we signed a half-year lease for a cool, damp, single-story dwelling. The modest structure was placed near the crest of a large hill that stood above the town. The road on which we lived was paved until it became gravel as it entered a patch of mature pine trees. The property proved ideal for our border collie. There was virtually no traffic on our dead-end road, so we permitted him to venture outside on his own.

Black Mold

Shannon woke up in the morning complaining of numbness to her hands and that they ached. The problem occurred every morning. We eventually took her to the emergency room at a local hospital. I happened to mention that black mold was present on the ceiling above where we slept. The doctor advised that we move out of the house as quickly as possible.

After we had returned home from the emergency room, I walked down to my landlord's house to inform her of the problem. Before I explained my reason for coming, she told me that her cat had died and that she suspected that the cat died after getting into our garbage on the front porch. Crying as she spoke, she used the cat's death as a pretext for asking us to move out. I replied that we had a cat too, who was allowed outside, and that the trash hadn't affected her. I then went on to tell the lady that black mold could be found on our ceiling and that Shannon appeared to have symptoms from exposure to its spores.

Shannon who was skilled at researching the relevant laws concluded that we should withhold the rent until the problem was solved. A contractor, whom Shannon had befriended,

Orientation

The Empire building housed the auditorium. The employee orientation, which consisted of three in-service days, was scheduled for six hours each day. I spent most of the time sitting in the college auditorium where I listened to different administrators talk about subjects that pertained to their positions.

I detected that I was the topic of the conversations by people around me. It made me nervous. I felt as if I were the focus of negative attention. I responded by becoming apprehensive and aloof. I stood alone outside the auditorium during one of the breaks. Before proceeding to enter the auditorium, the president of the college stopped for a moment and said, “Hi,” to me and mentioned that she had a BA in sociology that she had earned from Oregon University. It struck me at the time as an effort to relate to me on a more personal basis.

The Little Dweebs

My border collie ran across the dirt road and into the yard across the street. I circled the property’s house one or two times before I caught up to him. On the days that followed, Shannon and I observed the residents of the house outside erecting a fence. Shannon greeted the young interracial couple. The man had on a cap and overalls. He sounded folksy, sometimes saying, “Oh heck...” before his responses to questions. Shannon asked the young man if he was Southern. He said that he was not, but continued, “Isn’t it all country now, anyway.” He had already divulged that he had been raised in Coos Bay, where almost all the youth listened to hip hop, which made his country identity unusual.

Shannon disagreed with the man by insisting that the South was distinct from other regions in the country. She emphasized that Southerners felt a unique pride due to their heritage by referring to the emotional swell they experience from the raising of the Confederate flag. His

wife said little or nothing during the short, neighborly back-and-forth. Her long-haired, country-boy husband did the talking.

The next day, Shannon greeted the young wife who was opening the gate before she pulled their family truck into the couple's driveway. Failing to acknowledge my wife's presence, the woman ignored Shannon. My wife took offense to what she perceived as a snubbing and complained to me when back in our house.

Our house had thin walls that were made with wooden boards. Due to the climate, there was no insulation in the attic space. Every sound that we made inside the house could probably be heard by neighbors if they happened to have their windows open. I thought that I had heard conversations by the neighbors across the road. On some occasions, it sounded as if they commented upon things that Shannon and I had said to each other. This made me weary because I didn't want certain aspects of my lifestyle revealed to members of the community. The college where I worked was in Coos Bay, and I didn't want gossip about me to make its way to people at the college. I investigated how the conversations between Shannon and me were monitored. I concluded that our house's walls functioned as an amphitheater. I stood outside the house to listen to my wife inside talking plainly. I entered and said, "It's like an echo chamber." I became more convinced that the rumor mill did, in fact, exist.

Escape from Oregon

I planned on leaving Oregon with my wife after the school year had ended. My one-year appointment ended in the middle of June. We had no incentive to stay any longer. Money was an issue, so we planned to move in with my parents in Frankfort, Illinois. I decided that we would wait until I had unemployment. Oregon's benefits offered 500 Dollars a week for several

months, which I assumed was much better than what Tennessee would offer. Once I had successfully performed all the tasks that had to be done in the state, we would begin the long drive East.

Ghosts from the Past

My wife and I had terrible arguments in motel rooms. We were asked to leave from numerous motels because of our behaviors. The police were called on us over twenty times, but neither of us were ever arrested. I began to believe that people followed us from one motel to the next with the aim of occupying rooms close to ours. We had become a subject of fascination for a network of people, whose intention was to facilitate one of our arrests.

At the Best Western in Medford, Oregon, I remember seeing a familiar face. Years ago, I had tried to meet with my dissertation advisor. I ultimately missed the appointment because my ticket was given away despite the fact that I had arrived at the gate on time. When flying back from Albany on a Southwest flight into Midway Airport, I sat next to a man who had graying hair, glasses, and a mustache. I spoke to him toward the end of the flight, explaining my fear of landing at Midway. Walking to my room at the Best Western, I noticed the same man standing outside his room. Soon after passing him, he became one of the characters who occupied my head.

When in a small town south of Coos Bay, named Bandon, I visited a supermarket in the evening. As I entered, I looked to my right and saw a disheveled man in a suite with long curly hair and a mustache standing next to the newspapers. He appeared to be the forensic psychologist from Jon Jay who was sometimes interviewed on cable news. He stared at me as I passed, giving me the feeling that his observation of me had been planned.

While in Coos Bay, Shannon told me that she thought that she was being followed. I didn't try to persuade her otherwise. I hoped that she was in the initial stages of realizing what I already knew.

Psychoanalysis

Hypnotists spoke words through me, making me feel as if they were positioned behind me while pushing words out my mouth. I enjoyed the experience because it provided the possibility that I might learn about my situation. I also took the opportunity to vent my frustrations by making threats. I promised to someday make their misdeeds public.

Enslavement

The hypnotists practiced anticipating how I would act out the decisions that I made. Taking over my agency required that they first overwrite my own thoughts by suggesting them prior to the thought being instantiated in my mind. They continued until they had successfully gotten to a point where they could suggest the option in advance of my decision.

If the effort was sustained, new behavioral dispositions might displace those that originally existed.

Interrogation

I was led to think that Supreme Court justices periodically interrogated me.

I was alone in the bedroom of the house. Believing that nobody could overhear me, I took the opportunity to speak freely with my disembodied prisoners.

The hypnotists had me make utterances that simultaneously assumed more than one meaning. When behaving as if I were under interrogation, one frame (A) was defined as a conversation between the characters with whom I conversed. This can be defined as an interrogation

(B). This frame was placed within another frame defined by the ongoing cognitive/behavioral intervention (C).

I knew that the intervention sought to extract information from me that could be used in a psychoanalysis that mapped my cognition. I'd make a statement that pertained to a subject of discussion. My remarks, however, also served as a response to a question that I had been unconsciously instructed to answer. It was revealed to me each time that I inadvertently answered an inaudible question. This interrogative tactic caused me to divulge sensitive information about myself that I would have otherwise concealed.

I had already determined that externalizing accurate reflections about myself wasn't in accord with my interests. After all, descriptions that I gave of my beliefs, values, and behavioral intentions were relevant to an ongoing enterprise that had malevolent purposes.

It was a situation that paralleled what Winston underwent after being detained by the party in *Nineteen Eighty-four*. The interrogators probed his psyche. In the process, they identified his profoundest fear. They used this insight to break Winston. After having nothing left to hold onto from his former self, the protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-four* was then rebuilt as a model member of the party. The hypnotists in my situation were also concerned with discovering my greatest fear. I recall thinking to myself when an upper classman in high school that I feared more so than anything else the imposition of a sobriety that I couldn't escape. Those behind the project wanted to break me down and refashion me so that I not only modeled NPD but internalized its diagnosis.

Mind Control

The hypnotists suggested possible scenarios that provided explanations for what I was experiencing. One account maintained that a fascist revolution was underway. Revolutionaries in

the FBI for decades had been adjusting the belief system of the American public to support their revolutionary objectives by inducing hypnosis on a massive scale and using it to gradually skew peoples' perceptions of society. The hypnosis was done through devices that played voices that couldn't be recognized among other ambient sounds.

If the hypnosis continued until the hypnotic suggestions took root as beliefs, then there'd be a widespread ideology that had hegemonic potential. The American people would embrace the reforms that were institutionalized one by one as part of the new totalitarian society before understanding the ultimate goal of the changes.

Through the use of devices and hypnosis, all deviance, in effect, would be medicalized. Accordingly, any dissent would be defined as deviant and treated with hypnotherapeutic interventions. I was identified as recalcitrant so my resocialization provided a landmark test case for their hypnotherapy. Executive orders signed by Clinton had permitted federal agencies to conduct classified human research without approval by an Institutional Review Board whose members worked as academics outside of the agency. If the project was highly secretive, then only the person heading the agency was needed to authorize the research.

The FBI used its power to conduct classified human research to exercise extra-judicial executions of Americans. It was tantamount to a summary execution, because there was no due process. What was unusual was that it didn't occur immediately, because the FBI suspended the sentence until the they had completed experimentation upon the condemned subject. I had taken LSD with my wife the night that I was informed that I had been selected by the FBI as a classified human research subject. The experimentation's execution justified harm to me that would amount in death because the social importance of the research.

I was repeatedly fed suggestions that Paul Wolfowitz was among the van guard of the revolution.

I was convinced that the device embedded in my jaw made the scenario of the fascist-revolution plausible. I was a test case. Experimentation upon me was in preparation for the device's more widespread implementation. Potential opponents to the revolution would have transponders inserted into the jawbones during dental operations and undergo hypnotherapy intended to modify antisocial behaviors.

The technology wouldn't be publicized until well after its use had reached a considerable scale, modifying the attitudes and behaviors of enough of the population that opposition to the revolution had no basis for support.

Supercomputers could be instrumental in the orchestration of a social movement whose members acted largely unconsciously. Such a revolution promised to be bloodless and cause minimal social disorganization.

Another scenario made me the test subject of an experimental treatment for drug addiction. The FBI was working on a plan to eliminate chronic drug addiction in society. People who had used drugs for extended lengths of time had transponders implanted in their jaws. They were given one chance to enter recovery. If they failed to abstain from all drug use, then they'd be hypnotized to self-destruct.

A forceful attempt to hypnotize.

Alone, I paced in the bedroom. The hypnosis felt like a force building behind me. My emotions were being lifted.

I described how modern team sports reflected ancient Greek rules-of-war. I claimed that team sports were organized according to the same principles. There were only two teams on the

field at a single time. Everything was transparent, so all those playing were in plain view. There was to be no ambushes or interferences. No cheating can occur because everything that an opposition has at its disposal can be seen on the field of battle.

After I complained of narcolepsy, she had no reservations prescribing a new anti-narcolepsy medicine, marketed as Provigil, in addition to the Adderall that I already took. In fact, she gave me handfuls of the sample Provigil packets during each office visit. Provigil when it was first introduced to the market was distributed by doctors as samples because it had yet to be scheduled as a controlled substance.

Pagan Virtue

I am an evolutionary retrograde, unconsciously harboring values and interpretations of the world that circulated prior to Christianity. I do not believe in absolutes, no monotheistic god who imposes moral principles. The gods value certain virtues that are sometimes demonstrated in human lives. The propensity to keep trying despite past failures and present obstacles is one such virtue. The ability to possess a dynamic character as opposed to a static one is another such virtue. To possess such a virtue, one must learn as he lives. Another principle is that violent conduct should take place on flat field that allows for transparency, precluding ambush.

Proof of Polytheism

If we are to anthropomorphize the divine, then god must exist within the universe and not outside it. After all, the Christian notion of the supernatural is a fallacy. If a transcendent god interdicts in human affairs, then such an event takes place in this world and is, therefore, worldly.

It would be better to revise the definition of nature than insist that god is transcendent, existing in a sphere that is unreachable yet coinciding with our own. Rather than multiplying entities beyond necessity, we should take Ockham's razor to this conceptualization of divinity, and discard with the transcendent, and instead define divinity as within nature.

We can also do away with the prevailing monotheistic conception of divinity. If a god exists, there must be more than one god, because there must be an agency responsible for the god's creation. Without such an antecedent, god must have brought himself into existence, requiring him to have preceded his own existence, what amounts to a paradox. Therefore, there are a plurality, perhaps infinite number, of gods within the universe. I find the prospect of a deified world enrapturing. The intrigue and speculation inspired by divine and magical explanations for nature serve as an antidote to the disenchantment of the Pewter Age.

Sidewalks

When marching down the sidewalks of my neighborhood I took note of symbols painted on the concrete blocks. There was sometimes a letter, "g," with an arrow next to it. The "g" was an abbreviation for mountain goat, my totem, the nonhuman part of my personality. Other times below my feet I saw the letters, "ERC." My initials had arrows drawn beside its letters pointing different directions. On the asphalt path that led from Franklin Road to the concrete bike trail, I took note of the locution, "prom?" that was sprayed on the sidewalk with violet paint.

Undercut Overcut

I noticed a technique used by the hypnotists whispering behind my head. I called it, "Undercut, Overcut." I felt a thought come to mind in the form of a mental representation. As soon as the image formed in my mind, I heard a voice uttering an expression whose meaning was roughly equivalent to the picture in my mind's eye.

I understood what I was experiencing as an undercurrent of suggestions and an overcut of audible speech. I wasn't sure what the intent of the operation was. Perhaps, they were trying to get me to confuse the voice of another person with the inner voice that I heard privately as the expression of my own thoughts. Another possibility was that the hypnotists were trying to taunt me. They were suggesting that I had lost the capacity to think independently and produce my own thoughts. They wanted me to believe, all my cognitions, consisting of both images and words, were being implanted by hypnosis.

A Rounded Childhood

I was a shy child. I was awkward to the point that I made people with whom I interacted either sympathetic or uncomfortable. I had no trouble speaking to my parents, but when socializing with peers stringing together a sentence was a rare accomplishment. My parents, of course, detected my crippling social inhibitions and decided that to immerse me in youth activities was better treatment than to seek professional help.

South Hills, Pittsburgh had a Spartan culture. It was both conservative and homogeneous, consisting of people who were white and middle class. Its emphasis upon conformity made mental illness a stigma that was difficult to manage. My parents feared that being labeled as mentally ill might be more socially debilitating than the symptoms themselves. They substituted team sports and organized activities for psychiatry and psychotherapy.

I had division one offers but, taking my dad's counsel, decided that I was only interested in academically superior institutions. The coach of Cornell expressed interest in me and flew me into Ithaca for a visit. On my father's advice, I refused to apply to the agricultural school, and

instead against the coach's advice applied to college of liberal arts. In the end, the coach's sway in the admissions office insufficient for me to be accepted. I could have gone to either Colgate or Davidson if I had followed advice from their coaches and applied early decision, but my dad didn't want to exclude the option of Cornell from my final decision. I didn't get into the two liberal arts schools either. It looked as if I would attend Penn State in the spring of 1996 and I'd have to be a walk on if I wanted to play soccer. The promise of soccer getting me into academic prestigious institutions despite my underachievement in high school was no longer an incentive to play soccer. I was also angry at my father, so I made resolution to never play soccer again and ruin his expectation of having college soccer games to attend.

My Dad, feeling partially responsible, made a final effort to get me into an academically superior institution. He arranged for me to meet the coaches of Lehigh and Lafayette. The Lafayette coach was unavailable, so he arranged to have me meet with someone from the admission office instead. I remember reading a book in preparation for the interview, *The Death of Commonsense*, which my father suggested. They must have had a need for someone with my background because the woman who interviewed me said she could offer me a spot in the freshman class in the fall, probably because they wanted some kind of diversity, and I was middle-middle class and not someone from a wealthy family in Connecticut or suburbs of New York. I filled out the application knowing that I was already accepted.

I remember quitting marijuana a month before classes, so it didn't interfere with my thinking. I knew that the students at Lafayette were superior to me, so I wanted to be as clearheaded as possible. I confided in a sociology professor, expressing my concern that everyone was from a prep school, and I probably wouldn't possess the necessary background to succeed. He assured me that only forty percent of the student body were from prep schools, and

I would do just fine. He then told me how a country club never allowed entry to his Irish father who served as its golf pro. I graduated Cum Laude with a GPA high enough to attend graduate school with an assistantship.

The authentic personality resists authoritarianism because it's a hindrance to its self-actualization. Authoritarianism stymies the personality's authenticity. Pressures to conform interfere with the authentic personality's mindfulness that he is constructing by the decisions that he makes an original biography. Even if encumbered with the obligations entailed by assuming a social role, the individual remains aware that he is building a unique biography and remains original.

Authentic personalities can stylize their existence, which introduces into society alternative lifestyles and modes of sociability. Rather than seeking the comfort homogeneity and so he joins ranks of those submissive to authority and its expectations, the personality strives for individuality achieved by his idiosyncratic patterns of behavior.